

WHO CARES ?

WE DO !!

Experiences in Family Support U.S. Army War College Class of 1992 Spouses and Students



Department of Command, Leadership, and
Management

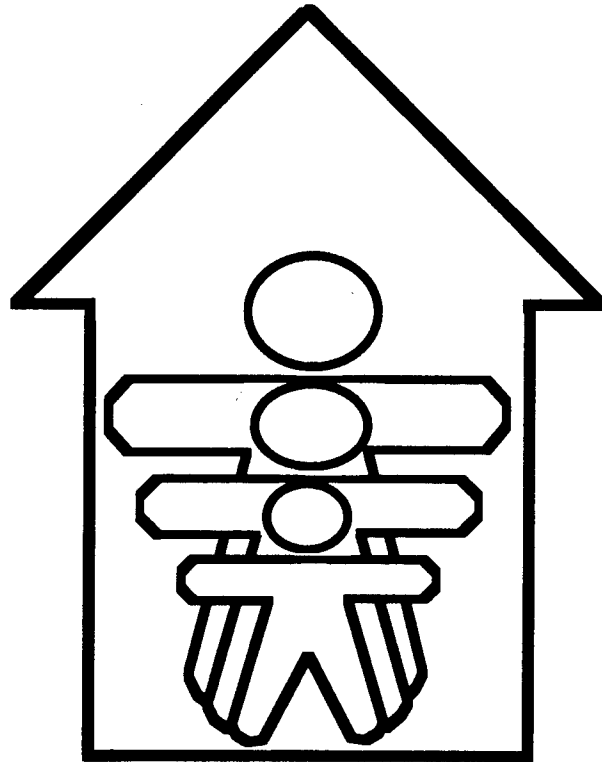
U.S. Army War College

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WHO CARES?



WE DO!!

EXPERIENCES IN FAMILY SUPPORT

U.S.Army War College Class of 1992

Spouses and Students

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FOREWORD

This family support document presents experiences of commanders and commanders' wives during peacetime and recent major deployments. This publication is the work of the Class of 1992 U.S. Army War College spouses and students. There was an expressed need to record the experiences of this class regarding family support. As many had recently left command experiences and had been involved in Operations Just Cause, Desert Storm, and Desert Shield, this document attempts to capture some insights into what family support is, is not, should be, and could be for the future. This is a compilation of their words--both the good and the bad experiences. The authors trust that this information will help those who are or will be responsible for and involved in family support. This document should greatly assist the training of future commanders and their spouses during Pre-Command Courses.

These experiences are presented as minimally-edited raw data. For example, Chapter 2, "Advice, Innovations, and Ideas in Preparation for Family Support Involvement/Leadership," is simply a compilation of the responses and includes some repetition. But the authors consider it to be one of the most important chapters. In addition to preparing this book, a briefing was prepared and presented to LTG Carney, the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, on a suggested plan for family support in the future. This briefing is in Chapter 7.

This report, written and developed by military spouses, provides much needed insights into the successes and shortcomings of currently structured family support programs. The Army leadership must consider family support as a combat multiplier, and lend it adequate support through command channels to eliminate or substantially reduce problem areas identified in this report. The forecasts, inferences, and conclusions contained in the report are those of the authors. As such, they do not reflect an official view or approval of the U.S. Army War College, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, or the Department of the Army.



William A. Stofft
Major General, U.S. Army
Commandant

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This family Support document presents experiences of commanders and commanders' wives during peacetime and recent major deployments. Because more than one-half of the U.S. Army War College Class of 1992 had commanded units during Operations Just Cause, Desert Shield, and Desert Storm, there was a general desire to capture their family support-related experiences. Who Cares? We Do! captures the essence of the motto, "The Army takes care of its own," through actual experiences unparalleled since the Vietnam War.

The culture of the Army has dramatically changed during the past 20 years. Married soldiers have significantly increased to more than 50 percent, 60 percent of wives work outside the home compared to 30 percent in 1970, and the Army has renewed emphasis on taking care of soldiers and their families. Family support is a combat multiplier if done well, but can have a demoralizing impact if soldiers perceive that their families are not adequately cared for in their absence.

This report, written and developed by military spouses, provides much needed insights into the successes and shortcomings of currently structured family support programs. It is important that the Army leadership give family support systems adequate support through command channels to eliminate or substantially reduce problem areas identified in this report.

What Worked?

For all of the positive accomplishments of family support structures, what most often receives the attention is the negative aspects or incidents. Thus, problem areas are almost always spoken simultaneously with the mere mention of Family Support Groups in units throughout both CONUS and OCONUS. This is unfortunate, for there are many, many success stories of Family Support Groups in units throughout both CONUS and OCONUS.

Some of the successes of Family Support Groups are captured here in Chapter 4, "What Worked." These successes are grouped under the following: Activities/Social Events, Communication, Outside Unit Support, Rear Detachments, FSG Structure, and Briefings/Training. The experiences within each section are further grouped geographically into CONUS and OCONUS. Although many situations are similar in both locations, different cultures and climates have different needs and require varied resources.

What Didn't Work!

As we all know, things do fail us at times. Even in the best of systems, problems will occur. Chapter 5, "What Didn't Work," provides specific examples and experiences of many people involved with Family Support Groups. The groups were unique depending on branch of service, size, mission, and amount of support provided from the military and civilian community in their area. Their specific problems were also unique. However, there appeared to be some definite problem areas. Lack of a working Family Support Program during peacetime, inadequate rear detachments, little knowledge of existing regulations, and uninformed and unprepared wives ranked among the most prevalent issues.

In most cases, "What didn't work" was made "to work" by some very dedicated volunteers. Using tremendous amounts of determination and perseverance, they had to work through and/or around the system to "make things happen." This was not easy and took more time and energy than it should have. Frustration with the system frequently discouraged volunteers.

Family support should not be difficult! If constant emphasis, by the entire military chain of command, is placed on family support, there will be a big difference in the attitudes of the unit volunteers. They will then get the outside support they need.

Capable Rear Detachments should be a requirement for all units, and agencies on post should shoulder the full responsibility for dysfunctional family members. They alone have the trained personnel to deal with these people.

Military leaders at all levels should be trained in the requirements for a successful Family Support Program and be held responsible for its function both during sustainment and during deployment. This includes requiring that all soldiers and their families be made aware of what Family Support Groups are and are not.

Family Support Group volunteers should not have to struggle to find a place to meet, supplies to function with, or any other necessary resource. They should only be involved in emotional support, flow of information, and referral of problems to the appropriate agencies. Regulations for peacetime should be reviewed for possible modification during war.

Chapter 5, "What Didn't Work," highlights these problem areas with actual experiences. Persons involved in supporting families in the future will be more informed and better prepared for the demands of family support after reading this section.

Advice

Specific advice for those who are about to become involved in family support comprises Chapter 2, "Advice, Innovations, and Ideas in Preparation for FSG Involvement/Leadership." We hope this information will also prove valuable for commanders as they develop and improve their family assistance programs. This information was compiled from questionnaires completed by commanders' spouses and from comments given during our January 1992 Family Support Conference. In preparing this section, we first brainstormed the questions: What advice would you like to pass on to someone before they become involved in family support? What do you wish you had been told? The comments and "advice" are in the writer's own words and grouped by author in an attempt to preserve the emotion and commitment to excellence of the contributors. In an effort to maintain author integrity, some repetition has been accepted.

One main item to keep in mind is that what worked for one group may or may not work with your group. You have to work with the people and resources available and have the best program that your group is comfortable with and capable of.

The single best piece of advice is don't do anything that you don't want to do. If you are the commander's wife and you are not interested and committed, you should not be in charge of the Family Support Group, or even participate a great deal. Doing otherwise has a detrimental effect and the entire group suffers. Be prepared to live with your decisions. If you choose to act in an advisory role, or not at all, you cannot also expect to have "veto" power over group decisions.

Family Support Groups

The definition of a Family Support Group is as diverse as the people questioned. Each individual has personal thoughts of what the definition should be. However, there seems to be a few consistent traits that should be included. A Family Support Group should provide open two-way communication, up and down the chain of command. The group should provide a line of communication with the command (who "owns" the program) and should provide information on resources to the unit's families. The Family Support Group may also be a social group, but that is not its primary function.

The structure of a Family Support Group also is diverse. It has revolved around something as unstructured as a coffee group to a structure of the leader being appointed by the commander with other key representatives forming the remainder of the leadership core.

Rear detachments ranged from "no rear detachment" to "token individual left behind" to "qualified and caring rear detachment left in place." From the responses, it is evident that Family Support Groups functioned with less difficulty and more confidence when the rear detachment was guided by someone who was qualified (knowledgeable in all areas) and did not view the job as something distasteful or demeaning. In such cases, the Family Support Group had positive experiences.

The most inconsistent area, from the responses, seems to be the training provided to and/or required of the representatives of the Family Support Group. Training given or required ranged from none provided, to training offered only for the commander's spouse, to extensive training required for all Family Support Group representatives.

Family Support Groups should provide four primary functions: communication and rumor control; education--social, orientation to unit and Army, volunteer training, and an understanding of community resources, both civilian/military; social contacts for emotional/spiritual support, and to properly welcome and farewell family members; and crisis-assistance referral for immediate response to emergencies, long-term emotional support, and professional referral. An overarching goal of Family Support Groups should be to teach family self-sufficiency during peace and war.

What is Unresolved?

One wife responded, "The Army needs to understand that, as Family Support Groups currently stand, it is asking for free employment from the non-commander half of the 'command team' at all command levels." This expression exemplifies the feelings of many Family Support Group Leaders because of unresolved and unanswered issues resulting in the confusion between family support requirements and Family Support Group responsibilities. The three major areas requiring attention are training/education, inconsistencies, and regulations.

The wives generally agreed that more training is needed--earlier education at all levels and continuously updated--for the soldier and his/her family. Training should be included for young soldiers about Family Support Groups early in their career. Education to new soldiers and families should also teach what Family Support Groups are not. Expectations for Family Support Groups are not clearly defined. The Army is not adequately marketing the benefit of effective Family Support Groups, which makes it difficult to recruit volunteers and key people.

Many inconsistencies were noted throughout this sampling of wives and commanders. The same information/guidance did not reach all posts; many wives were not aware of existing resources provided by the Army. There was significant frustration that Posts do not uniformly interpret policies at their level. Sharing by the wives in this study revealed significant inconsistencies in unit Family Support Groups, i.e., there is no norm.

Regulations caused much confusion, and surfaced a definite need for a universal organized system. The wives nearly unanimously recommend that an active duty soldier be designated as a Unit Families Officer. A real need exists for a standard place and person for a family support resource representative at all installations. A new regulation is needed on funding reimbursement to volunteers and relaxing postage restrictions on newsletters during war. Clarification is required on responsibilities and acceptable courses of action for dealing with family-member troublemakers, especially wives.

Many of the frustrations, concerns, and hopes experienced by this sampling of Family Support Group members can be alleviated. The quality of family support for tomorrow's Army should be improved through new consistent training, education, and regulations. The issues enumerated in Chapter 6, "What is Unresolved?" are now being reviewed by the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Department of the Army.

Summary

This report, written and developed by military spouses, provides much needed insights into the successes and shortcomings of currently structured Family Support Programs. The Army leadership should consider family support as a combat multiplier, and lend it adequate support through command channels to eliminate or substantially reduce problem areas identified in this report. There are historical differences between the acculturation and resulting expectations for enlisted and officer wives.

Another revelation from the spouses was the lack of skills-oriented training during Pre-Command Courses at Fort Leavenworth. Many wives were not prepared for the demands placed by younger wives, nor for the rejection experienced when unit wives did not attend informational meetings designed to keep them up-to-date. This document should greatly assist commanders and their spouses as they prepare for command assignments. Hopefully Advanced Courses and Pre-Command Courses will be able to use the experiences and recommendations in Who Cares? We Do! We all care about soldiers and their families and want to prevent or alleviate unnecessary problems. If this publication supports that goal, our efforts will have been worthwhile.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This publication is the work of the Class of 1992 U.S. Army War College spouses and students. There was an expressed need to compile the experiences of this class in the area of family support. As many couples had recently left command experiences and many had been involved in Operations Just Cause, Desert Shield, and Desert Storm, it was felt that we could offer some insights into what Family Support is, isn't, should be, and could be for the future. This is a compilation of their words--both the good and the bad experiences. We feel that this information is important to pass on to those who are, or will be, responsible for and/or involved in Family Support.

Please keep in mind that these ACTUAL experiences are presented as minimally edited raw data (some topics will also appear in multiple sections). Chapter 2, "Advice, Innovations, and Ideas in Preparation for Family Support Involvement/Leadership," may be the most difficult to read. It is simply a compilation of the data, as received, with some repetitions. But, we feel it is one of the most important chapters of this book. Throughout, the reader will find comments from many sources on specific areas that we wanted to address. While compiling our experiences, we also found two Military Studies Papers written by members of this year's Army War College class. They have addressed some of the same issues we covered. We have included parts of these as further documentation in "The Military Members' Viewpoints," Chapter 7. In addition to preparing this book, a briefing was prepared and presented to LTG Carney, the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel on our suggested plan for Family Support in the future, included at Chapter 8. We also compiled and submitted recommended changes to the Draft of DA PAM 608-47. These proposals are contained in Appendix C.

We began our work by organizing and attending a conference on family support issues in January 1992. Our theme was: WHO CARES? WE DO! Our agenda for the conference was:

- A keynote address by BG Roe (Commander, Army Community and Family Support Center)
- Small group discussions on:
 - What should Family Support Be?
 - What should it not be?
 - Who and what is involved?
 - What worked? The good experiences.
 - What didn't work? The not-so-good experiences.
 - How do you feel? Do you see change? What remains unresolved?
- Reports of small group discussions.
- Research findings by Dr. Joel I. Teitelbaum and Ms. Doris Durand (Walter Reed Army Institute of Research)
- British Army Alternatives by Colonel Peter Rostron and Mrs. Susi Rostron

- U.S. Navy Alternatives by Mrs. Shirley Ross (Bureau of Naval Personnel)
- What's at the Cutting Edge with Family Support? by Mr. Bob Ray, (Community and Family Support Center)
- Resources Available:
 Ms. Shauna Whitworth and Mrs. Mary Ellen Crumley (Family Liaison Office), Mrs. Charlotte Whittingstal (Installation Volunteer Coordinator, Ft. Hood, TX.), and Mrs. Roxy Parrish (Volunteer/ Family Support Group Program Director, Ft. Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield, GA.)

Prior to the conference and after its completion, we asked the student spouses to complete a questionnaire. We also used this questionnaire to interview bachelor commanders here at the Army War College. The majority of our responses came from Army, National Guard, Army Reserve, Air Force, and Marine spouses. We have input from persons in all types of units in both CONUS and OCONUS assignments, and with various lengths of deployments ranging from a few days to a year.

CHAPTER 2

ADVICE, INNOVATIONS, AND IDEAS IN PREPARATION FOR FSG INVOLVEMENT/LEADERSHIP

In preparing this section, we first brainstormed the questions: What advice would you like to pass on to someone before they become involved in Family Support? What do you wish you had been told? Following is a listing of those ideas:

- Can't please everyone
- Experiences will likely vary between individuals
- Clues for continuity--leave an after action report
- Ensure Family Support operates at each level
- You don't have to be a SUPERWOMAN
- Personal time-out, take care of yourself, too
- Clarify job descriptions for volunteers in Family Support
- Make "what if" decisions in advance, or at the beginning/be consistent for all
- Have someone to let off steam to--preferably not in unit
- How to get people involved (all ranks)--what worked
- Clarify priorities--do not "neglect" children/homes for Family Support
- Be aware that professionals may "burn-out," and be willing to listen to them
- Small turn-outs are OK--don't take personally--it's common
- Stress FSG importance before as well as during deployments--always important and should always be in place
- Expect and prepare for troublemakers/difficult people
- There will be coping problems
- Define where volunteer's role begins/ends and the command structure starts
- Use the military machine--spouses are only a sounding board
- Prepare for dealing with death in a unit

- OCONUS units attached to another servicing community may experience increased difficulties in maintaining good information flow
- Save stuff--newsletters, etc.
- Resource Center needed on all posts--centralized location for information, regs, etc. Brief FSGs on: Resources available--what, where, how, who's doing what; Professional services--refer problems and use them
- How to manage rumor control
- There's usually more than one side to a story
- Stress: don't ask willing workers to over-commit
- No time to play games
- Stress soldier's responsibility for himself and his/her family--should not expect a "babysitting service"
- Provide an 800-number for information on regulations, etc.
- Drop Thrift Shop responsibilities, etc. during major deployments.

Advice

What follows is specific advice for those who are about to become involved in Family Support. We hope this information will also prove valuable for commanders as they put into place their family assistance program. This information was compiled from questionnaires and from comments given during our January 1992 conference. The following comments and "advice" are in the writer's own words and grouped by author (separated by a line of asterisks) in an attempt to preserve the emotion and commitment to excellence of the contributors. In an effort to maintain author integrity, some repetition has been accepted.

One main item to keep in mind is that what worked for one group may or may not work with your group. You have to work with the people and resources available and have the best program that your group is comfortable with and capable of.

Single best piece of advice is don't do anything that you don't want to do. If you are the CO's wife you should not be in charge of the FSG, or even participate a great deal, if you are not interested and committed. Doing otherwise has a detrimental effect and the entire group suffers. Be prepared to live with your decisions. If you choose to act in an advisory role, or not at all, you can not also expect to have "veto" power over group decisions.

From experience, it is very effective to have someone other than the CO's spouse in charge of the FSG. The "approachability" factor is much higher; communication and trust develop at a faster pace. This does not exclude the CO's spouse if there is a genuine desire to actively participate.

You must be a "real" person to the people in the group. They have to meet and know you as "you" and not as Mrs. Col., etc. Do not "wear your husband's rank." Your husband's position or rank does not make you a more important person in the FSG.

If as the CO's wife you act in an advisory role--be positive. Listen with an open mind to suggestions, and unless a real problem exists don't put a damper on the group's spirit and enthusiasm.

There are many people in the unit willing and able to help--they just need to be given the opportunity. Make them feel important and you will discover a wealth of energy and ideas.

Keep the flow of information on-going. Even if there is nothing new to report on deployments, etc., say that "since last message, information remains unchanged." The members of the unit need to feel they are being kept informed. If information is still pending or not definite it is OK to say that, with the understanding that things may change.

The issue of who is the FSG leader is emotionally charged. For years that role has fallen on the commander's spouse. It does not need to be, is not mandated, and, in the majority of cases, is better when it is not that way. If the commander's spouse wishes to actively participate in the FSG she can be a valuable asset. She can be a representative of the FSG, but should not be the leader. She will then be in a position to share past experiences and offer a wealth of knowledge. This makes the experience much more enjoyable and less consuming. This also makes the group more effective and cohesive by having the CO's spouse be a partner in the group and "not the boss."

Remember the old adage- try and try again. If one thing doesn't work in a group, try something else. Keep trying different approaches until you find what works for you and your group.

I believe the role of the commander's wife is one of "cheerleader" and "troubleshooter". As a cheerleader she encourages the ideas, activities, and projects which the group initiates. As a troubleshooter she cuts red tape or smoothes over obstacles which surface along the way. She sets a tone of enthusiasm and high morale by being friendly, sincere, and fair. The commander's wife is looked upon as a role model. Whether she works outside the home, attends school, volunteers, or pursues her own interests, her influence on the unit can be very positive. It's just important that she be herself. No one wants her to be a martyr.

An important piece of advice is to involve everyone in the family support programs. There are many people within the unit who are willing to participate and help, whether they are officers or enlisted, spouses or sponsors. Many of them are very talented and can contribute a great deal to the success of the program. The challenge is to get them involved. I was fortunate that my husband (Battalion Commander) emphasized family support as part of the Battalion's mission essential tasks. In this way, the company commanders were closely involved in the battalion's family support programs, and in turn, they energized their soldiers and spouses to participate. This worked out very well since the companies had active programs that survived the test of periodic low attendance.

Remember, don't take it all upon yourself. Family Support is a Commander's program and it takes active involvement by all members of the chain of command to make it work. We do need some time to take care of ourselves. Establish a good rapport with everyone in the unit and it will go a long way to establishing a "Feeling of Family."

Working wives (especially Commanders wives--Bn/Co) should not be tempted to quit their jobs to have more time for unit activities/FSG at times of deployment. It is important for your own needs to keep that routine, although you may feel a need to adapt duty hours, use flex-time, take leave more than usual. Most supervisors will be understanding and supportive. [Another whole item: Community leaders should encourage supervisors to be sensitive to such needs.] Although I felt guilty about keeping my job, I needed it and it forced me to make time for myself. My co-workers were my outside confidantes because I did not work in the immediate community where I lived.

It is essential that groups operate at the lowest possible level. We struggled to get company groups going when soldiers/families in the same platoon didn't even know each other. In "normal" times, training is essential for leaders and spouses at company and platoon level, officer and NCO.

If your community has a crisis line or hotline, see if you can participate in their training and if volunteers in your group can benefit from it. Learn about listening skills and making effective referrals. Know when & how to bring in others to a situation.

Be careful of perceptions concerning rank. This is a very sensitive issue. Leaders may evolve from junior enlisted - senior spouses feel threatened and junior spouses are easily offended. Especially in this area "one bad apple" can spread serious discontent.

Set realistic expectations for yourself and others. Especially in forming new groups, small turnouts are the essential first step. Start out on a small scale. Don't force the issue--some people will never "catch the spirit" of unit participation. While they may in fact have a sense of belonging, they just choose to socialize in other circles like neighborhood, church, work, hobby/interest groups, etc.

You can't please everyone.

Try to be calm as well as positive. People do notice and your demeanor is more important than you may think. It is possible to be human and realistic at the same time.

There is sometimes a high turnover of senior leadership, so be prepared for variations in emphasis on FSGs.

Do what is right for your particular group.

Let people know in the beginning that there is no time for games. Senior leaders are busy people, so if someone makes a decision and passes that information to the leadership, then they must be prepared to live with their own decisions.

Ask people who work in busy places (PX, Shoppette, Video store, etc.) to help with rumor control.

Troublemakers: There are extreme cases. If it is not possible to seek the advice of a senior person, find a senior medical professional or clergy who could help figure out an approach that might work.

Senior commanders and their spouses can show tremendous support of Battalion Commanders and spouses by calling just to say, "Hi, how are you doing?"

At the beginning of a command and again during a crisis make it quite clear that anyone associated with FSG is a volunteer and will be doing his/her best. Don't expect everything to be perfect. If there is a criticism, make it known to the leadership and have a constructive alternative in mind. There is no need to be hateful.

Gossip is hurtful and unnecessary. Don't do it. (I was thanked by several wives for mentioning this point during a briefing.)

If people try to put a problem on you, put it back on them--ask what they think and how they feel it should be handled. You don't have to know all of the answers.

You must have your own support. Someone you trust and who cares about you. This person does not have to be military or even in the unit.

Be aware that professional services personnel (ACS, counselors, Chaplains) can burn out, too. They need their own support network.

If there is a crisis deployment, try to hold the first briefing within 24 hours of notification to confirm and explain what is happening and what to expect initially. Acknowledge the fact of a deployment or crisis and that there will be a natural emotional response. That's O.K. and good, but do not wallow in self pity. Within a week or so have a second briefing. The CO, FSG leaders, agency representatives, psychiatrist, Chaplain, etc. could be present to inform people of their services and concern.

Remember that people will be operating under extreme stress and do NOT ask for excessive volunteer work. FSG leaders must have time for themselves and their families, too.

In the beginning, make sure that spouses know that the Battalion Commander is with his/her soldiers and is not in a special protected area. It is his/her job to be with the soldiers. You are all going through the same experiences together.

Let people know that you will not always be the first one to hear "the official word" from your husband, and may often be the last one to hear. Therefore, if you have not passed along "the latest" you are not "holding out information." This is a common accusation made especially in reference to Battalion Commanders' spouses. Also, be aware that if you have children living away from home, relatives may do the same to them.

Inform spouses from the beginning and continually thereafter that only official, verified messages will be sent over the phone tree during a crisis.

It helps to have a special mail pick-up area (cubbyholes) for FSG and staff leadership. It is easier and faster to distribute information and also prevents the FSG leaders from being questioned to death in the regular mail line.

A bulletin board for each company or battery located near the mailroom is handy.

Briefings and small group meetings are important ways to communicate information to all who are interested. Those who care will show up.

If you live overseas in an isolated community, check regularly with leaders of supporting communities so you won't be left out. Sometimes people get busy and forget you're "out there."

In particular, contact each school that services your community and make sure that your situation is understood and what will be done to assist the children in coping with stress, etc. and how emergency situations will be handled in case of mass casualties.

We had two paid, full-time people who contacted spouses and handled social invitations. They were essential and helpful. The jobs they performed were too time-consuming for volunteers. There were also short suspense dates to consider. They prevented FSG leaders from being overused, abused.

When the Battalion returns from a crisis deployment, if overseas:

- a. Spouses should not drive to the airport.
- b. Warn that a senior leader (General or Brigade Commander) might be present to welcome home the Battalion with a short speech. Explain that it is important for the soldiers to be recognized as a unit before walking away to their rooms or homes. Some of them have no one waiting for them and this is all they may get.
- c. Do not forget, that if you have someone to welcome, how lucky you are. That is not the case for everyone. Keep your perspective.
- d. Battalions belong to Divisions, therefore all soldiers are the ultimate responsibility of the Commanding General so if he/she wishes to welcome home soldiers it is his/her prerogative.

If you work full-time, schedule a planned day off every two or three weeks.

It is not necessary for everyone to have the Battalion Commander's wife's phone number. People can leave a message with a FSG leader or Rear Detachment Officer and you can then make contact if necessary.

Request that the Division Band leave a recording of songs normally played to welcome home soldiers. This should not be used as an excuse not to show up in person.

Any problems, to include people who are troublemakers, that are present during sustainment will still be present during any type of deployment--only magnified.

If all else fails, just do your best and try not to worry about things. Easy to say, difficult to do.

If you feel inclined to let people contact you if there are problems/concerns, remind them, especially during a crisis, to do so.

Can't please every one. Meet with spouses in conjunction with deployment meetings. Provide fun activities and find what spouses want (i.e. educational, informational, games, etc.)

Troublemakers/difficult people: If the person's problem is not explained well or understood, refer to appropriate military rep (RDC, Community Commander).

Define where volunteer's role begins and ends--provide complete job descriptions for all volunteers with proper referral resources.

Dealing with death: Death and dying lectures by SWS/counselors and "as needed" referral for counseling support. Volunteers need instruction on "how to" as well as compassion.

Military agencies must know their support roles so that personnel can get support for problems.

FS leaders need to meet once a week with RDC and the commander or deputy commander. Problems need not always be discussed but policies need to be established.

Training for FS is so vital that spouses should receive information beginning at first association with the service.

Because we all have different personalities, we deal with issues in varying ways. Leaders may be unable to "make" all spouses become actively involved with FS.

Recommend a paid individual be the Brigade level FS person to coordinate and work with the Commander's support.

Have ACS coordinate more FS issues and work with spouses.

Need a multi-disciplinary agency to meet monthly with Commanders' wives to discuss/solve problems.

Need additional Commander's fund for FS support--gifts, newsletter, etc.

Need free child care for FS meetings.

Getting Started:

Find out what has happened in FS previously. Meet with CO wives and 1st Sgt wives. What worked? What didn't? Get suggestions from them--make FS a joint effort by unit leadership--set goals.

Talk to BN Co. What are his goals for FS?

Go to PAC to get a complete list of soldiers and family members. For all purposes make sure lists are updated periodically.

FS is a joint effort of family members and military side--You must work together--Keep CO updated.

Find out who and what resources are available.

Getting Participation:

Emphasis must come from command- if soldiers see no importance in FS they will ignore it and communication not be there.

Communication is paramount- The word needs to go out through phone trees and flyers. There needs to be a unit point of contact to make sure all get the word. (How to set up phone trees may need to be demonstrated). Things should work on micro levels: squad, platoon, company, etc.

Make FS meetings enjoyable, no one enjoys boredom. Use them as avenues to educate--invite resource people to speak, i.e., education counselor, ACS, job placement individual, school officials. Have cooking demos, bingo, etc. Have sign up sheets available to locate volunteers. Use resource people within unit. Invite Commander to answer questions. Prior to deployment--make important meetings mandatory and make soldiers responsible to be there with spouse. Offer babysitting so people may come with children. We had a VCR set up and provided some of our teens to sit. We sold tickets for raffles and money was used to pay the sitters. Have different units within the unit responsible for the program and allow them to plan the evening.

Volunteers:

- Need to be thanked
- Need to feel appreciated
- Are needed to make Family Support work
- Set the example by being a volunteer also
- Need to be given guidelines, i.e., a list of resource people
- Need to understand that gossip is OUT!

Rumor control: rumors are almost impossible to stop. However, they can be curtailed by limiting information access.

What I would tell a new CO's wife:

- You are only one person.
- Your family comes first.
- You can't do everything.
- Ask the CO what he wants done and ask for suggestions how to best do it.
- Use the military chain of command--Soldiers will often listen to their leaders.
- Lead by example.
- Treat people the way you like to be treated.
- Use the resources around you. You don't have to have all the answers.
- Check out the resources. Gather information from Red Cross, ACS, etc.
- Work with CO wives and 1st Sgt wives--get to know them, listen to their ideas, invite them to offer suggestions.
- Be aware that people will try to please you and say things they think you want to hear.
- Never take on something that is the military's job. Be a resource, but you are not the CO.

Deployment--exercises--training:

FS meetings need to be a mandatory function if this is where the word gets out. CO needs to be present and information given.

Rumor can be controlled if only those who need to know are told.

If CO's wife is not FS leader, someone has to be the POC. Make sure this person is identified well before.

Have action plan for who will do what, when, and how.

Keep communication open through phone trees to insure that everyone is OK. If no phone is available, go and visit. Have this set up on squad levels.

Newsletter: make military responsible to deliver. If they can't pay, hand deliver through designated military person--CO, 1SG. Make it important! CO needs to emphasize getting the word out and follow through.

Be a team. Develop team effort.

Upon leaving, leave an after-action report for the incoming FSG leader.

- Let her know what worked, etc.
- Include list of resource personnel.
- Let go, let new person take over.

No matter the wonderful things the commander's wife before you did, the best way you can begin is by being yourself. Be yourself, when you decide how active your role in FSG will be. Be yourself, as you meet the ladies that you're going to be with in this new unit. Be yourself, as you and the ladies "mesh" to form a FSG.

You can't be all things; do all things. Use the unit's resources and staff to accomplish as many chores, jobs, goals, etc. as the command will allow and support. Get to know the CSM and unit's S-1. Knowing these men, who work so closely with the commander, will keep many doors from being slammed in the FSG's face. After all...the help they give, the support they provide...is for the soldiers. But remember, your husband is the commander, these men don't work for you!

Wives and other members of the unit may be unsure of how to approach you, how to get to know you. Take the initiative: speak to them first, learn their names (and use them). As much as possible, take an interest in them, know their children and/or special things about their family. They'll know you care about them as a person, not just as a member of the unit. When working with ladies in the FSG, don't be afraid to roll up your sleeves and jump in right alongside them. You'll be seen as a part of the group, not set apart as the CDR's wife. Remember you can't do it all, let the members of the FSG show just how capable they are. Let them share in the planning, the work, and the rewards! Take time for yourself, time for your family, and time for your husband. In this "frantic" time called command, take time for

and give time to those special people close to you. Take time to give to yourself and to do for yourself; do things that replenish, rest, and strengthen; make time for your hobby, your reading, or your sport. But most of all, command and the FSG is a time you'll not soon forget.

Family Support Group Meetings Should:

Be short.

Be fun (have a program the people will enjoy--if you need to get out information, "package" it attractively).

Serve some food.

Provide free child care.

Perhaps the best piece of advice I can offer is not really advice as much as it is a reminder. It may sound like a cliché, but your first responsibility is to yourself. Make a conscious check of that every now and then. You will find that if your emotional well-being is intact, you can handle just about anything. Remember that the pressures you face, especially since you shouldn't be involved unless you are a true "volunteer", (I really do believe this) are those that you allow to be placed on you. That should give you some control. Use that control to relieve any pressure that you shouldn't be handling yourself: delegation and referral are two wonderful words.

Accept the fact that you can't change the nature of the volunteers you have; just be happy that you have them. You also can't change the personalities of those you will find yourself working with; whether they are cranky rear detachments, overzealous distaffs, or disgruntled family members. The point is, jump right in there and work with these people without taking conflict personally. Work with them knowing that the end product, supporting those who need it, is a worthwhile goal. If at times you find yourself wishing you could click your heels together three times and be back in Kansas--know that we all experience those times. We just have to learn to recognize them and then remember to take the time required to make things all right for ourselves again.

Suggestions I would give to the incoming Commander's wife:

Let the support group function as it is in place when you arrive for two months. That gives you time to:

Settle your home and children if you have them.

Sort out what only you can do (i.e. social or official gatherings that are specifically for commanders and spouses, unit/host country counterpart functions, etc.)

Get to know the people in the unit and observe the group dynamics and where you can best serve if you choose to do so.

Feel free to be uninvolved to the extent you want to- others can lead family support as well and sometimes better.

FSG Leaders:

Don't be afraid to drop an activity that is not supported by genuine volunteers or participants.

Encourage people to exercise their recognized abilities and interests if you are the Volunteer Coordinator.

Don't be consumed with the insatiable appetite of a family support group. Have fun. When the fun ceases and Family Support becomes a burden, be discerning as to why and get back on track.

Accept your group for what it is--active, inactive or in between.

Remember overinvolvement in others' needs can produce dependence, not healthy independence.

Familiarize yourself with resources available/NOT available

Need to be officially recognized and strongly supported by the Commander.

It's important to care about people genuinely, not for purpose of power or control.

Advice to FSG Volunteer:

Take a deep breath, relax, be yourself, not what you may think you are supposed to be or others might think you are supposed to be.

Learn about the Unit (what job does it perform, are you an attached unit, etc.)

Learn what your community can offer you and where to find support.

Find the S1: that person has the information you need for rosters, illnesses, etc.

Now you are armed with some knowledge. Keep your ears and eyes open to all around you.

Meet with your Chaplain.

Meet with representatives from each company.

Find out what went on before you reference FSG.

Try to keep some continuity so there is not confusion during the transition.

Stop! Try to absorb all the information you have received. A plan will begin to form in your head. Remember to build on what is already there.

Things that just pop-up:

The spouse who has finance problems, housing or other green suit related problems or responsibilities. (drivers licenses, birth certificates, green cards, phone disconnections) Keep this a green suit problem. Know your limits.

The troublemaker who will not stay out of others lives, who spreads rumors or untruths. Talk to this person to find if there is a solution, if not refer them to your Commander. If Commander is deployed, refer to RDC or community agency that can help (ACS can help you).

Try not to be all to all.

Delegate responsibility and refer to agencies that are qualified to help. Don't confuse your responsibility and that of the Service (green suit). It is so easy to take on more than you should.

Keep in mind what support means. You are not, nor are the other volunteers, substitute mothers or husbands.

Stress what the family's responsibilities are so there is no confusion.

Once you have laid down some guidelines for yourself and the FSG you will have an easier time.

No one can predict what will or could happen during your volunteer time; there is always something new that appears. Always remember what your support groups are (ACS, DPCA, MILCOM, UNIT), and use them.

Enjoy meeting and getting to know some of the most fascinating, infuriating, friendly, unhappy, and wonderful people in the world. This is the time when you will learn more about yourself and others, the system and your husband's (whether PFC or LTC) unit.

Advice to future FSG leaders/Volunteers:

I thoroughly enjoyed my experiences in Family Support Groups while my husband was in command. I looked at the responsibility as a privilege to care for and grow to love the families in our unit.

My advice to future leaders and volunteers in Family Support would be to view their roles as a helper to others. I never saw

my role as primarily administrative or restricted by "Army regulations" concerning Family Support. My fear now is that we will insist on too much training and structure and formal definition of Family Support. I would encourage leaders to make meetings warm and fun. We did this by playing silly games--once I gave prizes for whoever had specific odd items in their purses such as scissors, a screwdriver, 2 kinds of gum, etc. We always had several people bring food.

The turnout at meetings before Desert Shield/Storm was never very good, but those who came had a great time and I always felt that I had done my part. The meetings were announced and information given through battalion newsletter (which our S-1 and Chaplain put out). All families had the opportunity to respond.

I felt that my primary focus was to encourage and relay information to our company leaders-- who were Company Commanders' wives for the most part. We became close friends and I encouraged each of them to run their company support meetings according to the needs of each company. Some had strong enlisted leaders and they were encouraged to lead.

My advice to FS leaders in a major deployment--such as we faced with Desert Shield/Storm--would be to NOT over extend yourself. Make sure you eat and sleep as regularly as possible. I was much more vulnerable to pressure if I was neglecting basic needs. I started a prayer/support group for any and all wives in our unit. Only about 10 wives regularly came each week, but the strength we drew from the Lord and gave each other gave a stabilizing atmosphere to our whole unit.

I would also advise volunteers in this situation to keep children's schedules and activities as normal as possible. My five children played soccer and I found that the 'routine' of practice and games was therapeutic for all of us.

Phone calls can become very time-consuming and overwhelming during a crisis. I learned--after the first few weeks into Desert Shield--to keep a running phone log by the phone. I recorded name, date, time, nature of call, return phone number, and action to be taken. This helped immensely as I found 'remembering' details very difficult during this time.

I would encourage leaders during a deployment (or any time) to draw strength from the Lord. I know that it was because of my relationship with the Lord that I would have the ability to put things behind me and to ignore the tensions and tempers that would flare up between people. I confessed my failures, 'forgetting,' and many other shortcomings--encouraged others to forgive and forget--and the importance of saving our energy for other things rather than wasting it on bitterness and resentment.

I saw one of my major roles to be that of mediator between wives who were having trouble with each other. For this reason, I would encourage the commander, or whoever selects the FSG leader,

to select a mature person who is not given to gossip or frequently has friction in relationships. At times it was almost like the infighting that goes on between children in a family. Several times I met with very tearful and stressed-out leaders and helped them through the hurt inflicted by others in their company. Again, compassion and forgiveness usually prevailed.

FSG leaders--to be effective in interpersonal relationships, and to establish a true environment of caring--need to view their roles as a privilege rather than a dreaded duty. They need to stick to caring and let the Army do its part of delivering specific services.

Advice:

There are two sides to every story and you will probably only hear one side. You can't make judgements based on what you hear. Just refer information to the proper person.

Recruiting contact people is easy if you guarantee to them that all they will have to do is make phone calls (8-10) for you. And you need as many as possible--at least 2 per infantry platoon.

Your family support group will have to be set up by who and how many people you have available to help. They have to be custom made. Use other groups only as a guideline.

Stress to your young families that they need to have someone they can call on to babysit their children on an emergency basis. Possibly have a couple of people who would volunteer to take children in for an emergency, but keep their names confidential so they are not abused.

Research your Division to find out who you refer a dysfunctional family (ones who cannot cope with daily life) and as soon as possible take them out of the hands of the Family Support. Also find out who you call after duty hours and on weekends when normal offices are closed.

A mandatory pre-deployment briefing for married soldiers with encouragement to bring their spouses (possibly letting them out of PT the next day if they bring her). Making the briefing no longer than 1 hour in the evening and provide childcare. We had teenagers and/or medics babysit. If the meeting is too long you'll have a hard time getting them to come back the next time. Also 1 hour briefings leave time for socialization afterwards.

Decide on how often your meetings will be, depending on mission, and make them consistent. Same time, place, day. This stops confusion. And during the sustainment phase be sure that participation will drop. But also be aware that your whole goal is to make these families independent, and if they do not need an FSG social you have accomplished your mission.

Decide in advance (during the start of a CO's term) what you will do in the case of a death in the unit. Be it a soldier, child, wife, etc. For example, will you provide meals, flowers, card, collect money? Whatever you decide, be consistent. The same should be true for what you will do for newborns and hospitalization. Treat all ranks the same.

I think it is okay to tell someone they can no longer be a contact person for your group. I had a LT's wife who was a troublemaker and started many rumors. I eventually told her she would not receive any information from the Co level leader, it would come directly from me and she could not be a contact person. She eventually asked to be reinstated and tried much harder not to get the young wives stirred up. During that time I did call her with information as it came up so that she could not say that we didn't. The company level spouse then did not have to deal with her.

Be there for your company level people. They need someone to turn to when a spouse is giving them trouble. Often the company level FSG leader is very young with a young family and needs advice on how to deal with people and needs to know that troublemakers will be taken out of their hands.

Since it is so very hard to please everyone in an FSG, the Commander (since he does sponsor the FSG) should write the rules, and follow through within the unit. If an FSG member still has problems, then meet with that person along with the Battalion Commander or one of the other Company Commanders, and try to find a solution.

In most cases, the only way to deal with a difficult person or troublemaker, is to confront him/her and let them know that their undesirable behavior will have to stop.

An FSG volunteer's role begins with the agreement that she/he will take on the role. She/he will work with the families in the unit based on the needs of the unit and families, and according to the guidelines given to her by the unit leadership (Commander). The Commander will handle issues concerning the soldier: problems with work, drug tests, spouse and child abuse, etc.

It is a very good idea to compile a folder with FSG-related information. At almost every assignment you will gain important information. When the time comes to serve in a Leadership position, you can take some of this information (the most important) and pass on to volunteers within the unit. This is a good way to start them out with some knowledge on FSG (especially helpful for newly married leaders).

Family Support Groups are of most importance at the lowest level. The young enlisted soldier and his family are the ones who need our support--and most often are the most difficult to reach.

A clear job description needs to be written out in detail and given to a volunteer as soon as one agrees to take this role. The job description should be decided by the unit FSG leadership (according to their needs).

I think it is important to recognize newborn babies. That is a very important time in a soldier's life and they appreciate the acknowledgement. The First Sergeants were required to let us know when someone had a baby and each mother was provided with a pink or blue blanket delivered to the hospital, with the unit crest embroidered on the corner. One young wife did all the embroidery and kept them made up in advance. During deployments, the Rear Detachment kept us informed about babies being born.

If a wife calls the Commander's wife telling her another spouse has no money for food, then the Commander's wife should go through military channels for help. Military personnel are able to collect all necessary information concerning the personal aspects of the problem and then find the proper agency for help. Commander's wife or FSG can then support the spouse as required.

FSG Structure:

Commanders need to have each level of authority from CSM, CO, 1SG, Chaplain and Rear Detachment trained together so each person has a clear understanding of the Commander's FSG intent. This way the men of the unit might appreciate the value and should be responsible to pass on knowledge to the young soldier for his family.

First make your local agencies teach you their capabilities and limitations! They are the professionals, get to know each other.

Meet with your wives in charge separately to set policies.

Acknowledge key volunteers in public unit functions by explaining to others how important these volunteers are to the unit.

Learn how the unit Chaplain deals with problems. He can be a solid source of guidance and a great sounding board--better than a friend at times. After experiencing a death I learned how much a Chaplain can help, then I used him for advice in everyday issues--they are in the people business with a lot of training.

Build a relationship with S-1 and Rear Detachment so they learn your personality and will know how to expect you to react to difficulties.

The most effective FSGs are the ones perceived by the members as being organized and led by volunteers, not individuals who feel

it is their job because of their spouse's rank. Successful FSGs have been and can be led by:

- Co-leaders
- Elected boards
- Appointed boards
- Spouses of Battalion Commanders
- Spouses of Non-Commissioned officers
- Appointed or elected spouses of officers
- Mothers of single soldiers.

The leadership of a particular FSG must be developed in a way to best serve the particular needs of the group. The Battalion Commander's spouse as a leader is an option, but by no means the only option. Each FSG should be organized to assure continuity from command to command. It should be a strong, vital group effort. If it is decided that the Battalion Commander's spouse is to be the primary leader of the group, he/she should make a concentrated effort to share both leadership and responsibility with others to assure continuity when command changes. This is true no matter what type of leadership is established. Nothing is as disheartening as seeing an active FSG collapse when leadership changes because it has relied too much on the leader and not enough on each other.

Who should run a Family Awareness (Support) Group at Battalion level?

The answer is and always has been anyone the Battalion Commander feels would be suitable for the position.

However, the Army must also acknowledge the fact that the active participation of the commander's spouse or (spouse of a senior member of the unit) as the leader, advisor, or liaison to the commander can greatly benefit the FSG as a whole.

Because of the senior leader's spouse's position, she automatically has:

- Easier access to the commander.
- Clout within the unit and division.
- In most cases, some years experience.
- Whether she likes it or not, she is an example. If she participates others may also.
- Is a step up from the company level family support groups and could offer advice and support on issues that may not be desirably referred rear detachments.

Anyone can run a group, but the above-mentioned points can and do benefit the group. Not to acknowledge this true statement would be a disservice to those spouses who have given up the second income and/or time with their families to help support a unit. They are not allowed to have recognition, but at the very least, they deserve recognition that what they have chosen to do is worthwhile. Otherwise you may alienate the one group of people who have already worked so hard.

Before becoming involved or leading a Family Support Group, there are a few things one must do. As Family Support is a Commander's responsibility, you will need to talk with him/her. Determine what he/she envisions the program should accomplish and entail? What resources will they make available to Family Support? Will there be periodic, specified meetings with him/her regarding the Program, Support Groups, Family issues, etc. or will there be a liaison to work with and through? What are the specific duties and responsibilities of the Family Support Group in relation to the unit's Family Support Program? What are the specific job descriptions for the volunteer positions? If after this discussion the Commander wants you in an involvement or leadership position then request that he/she makes this known to the unit members (active duty and family members), the unit liaison for Family Support (if there is one), and all supporting agencies at the location.

The next step would be to personally learn of the resources available. You will need to go to each agency and see what they can and can't do for the unit in Family Support. Check into community resources beyond the military; for instance, other neighboring services resources, host nation resources, etc.

After these two steps you should have a clear idea of what needs to be done, what the Support Group will do, and what other agencies will do. Family Support Groups need to constantly assess the needs of its members. If it isn't needed, drop it; if something new comes up, find out from the Commander what his/her feelings are and how to best handle the concern.

You need to constantly ask questions--how, where, who, etc. You need to have specific goals in mind and a job description to follow. At all times you must remember that you are a part of the Commander's Family Program- you are not the entire program, there are others all working together- sharing, delegating, and caring for the families and men of the unit. BUT THE PROGRAM IS THE COMMANDER'S--it is his unit and you are all working for the benefit of all the members of the unit and their families.

Innovations, Ideas & Comments

GENERAL (multiple sources):

News Flash: a one page update added to the monthly newsletter to handle any late coming news or announcement not covered in the newsletter.

Bulletin Board in Battalion area: displayed photos of accomplishments of each Company and the FSG (fun times that would make wives want to attend) and a small section for a flyer of latest FSG happenings.

Wives' Survey: determine type of get-together preferred, guest speaker ideas, time of get-togethers.

Structure of FSG: to deal with distance, organizing Reps by neighborhood and company.

Newsletters: hand delivery of newsletters is best--Reps can check on wives as well as make sure they get info.

Key to success in a leadership role is to know the people you are trying to provide leadership for. A good leader leads by example. As in most battalions today, there was an Officers' Wives Coffee group and the bonding between them was good. The enlisted wives were more on the customer side. So we began efforts to draw them in at the company level and offer leadership positions for them. The formal organization of company FSG group was a great tool for this since we needed volunteers to be contact people, and we did get the volunteers. By the time Desert Shield/Desert Storm rolled around we had an operational FSG (about 8 months old). Also, this helped create a pool of volunteers that later became active outside the company setting.

Communication is very important. Even if the wives did not attend the meetings, they were contacted with information.

The constant contact through alternating Family Support Group meetings and newsletters helped to make our "presence" known to the families. The intent was to make it easier for them to ask for help when needed. The Family Support Group contact people's names and phone numbers were listed in each newsletter. They were also present at each family FSG meeting (and were reintroduced each time). We wanted people to know who was available to help them.

Volunteers from the enlisted side of the house were very effective. After all, the majority of the support you are attempting to provide will be for enlisted families (In our battalion, 95% of the personnel were enlisted soldiers). In theory, equitable representation seems reasonable. In practice, having active enlisted family volunteers definitely drew many more families in than the leaders' wives seemed able to do. I'm not sure why--it could have been as simple as "like responding to like." Whatever the reason, it seemed very effective.

We did not forget the single soldier. We contacted their parents for Just Cause, and included their geographically-distanced families in whatever we could. We also had the single soldiers get actively involved in planning and executing the stages of the Christmas Party and Organizational Day. The goal was clearly to support them by helping them feel that the Battalion was their family. (They are often forgotten in Family Support Schemes since FSG usually focuses on the "traditional" family.)

The company commanders understood that part of their command responsibilities included responsiveness to their Family Support

Group Representatives. They were to remain accessible and offer as much assistance as possible. After all, the FSG presumably made the company commanders' job easier because the task of Family Support must be accomplished with or without the volunteers' help.

You need to know how to work with volunteers. **NEVER** turn one away, and don't take them for granted. Be perceptive enough to realize each person's strengths, and steer them in that direction. They will be more fulfilled, stay with you longer, and things will run much smoother allowing you to delegate easier. If they are not a "people person," give them less contact with your families and more contact with your newsletter for example.

An active CSM's wife helps a lot.

Have Chaplains or counselors speak to FSGs and talk them through each of the deployment periods--sustainment, predeployment, deployment, and homecoming--letting them know that what they are feeling is normal and how they can cope with each of these periods.

The company commander's wife asked each platoon in the company to plan an activity for an FSG meeting. In this way, she involved everyone in the FSG and all ranks felt they had a say and were doing their part.

The basic structure was based on spouses' rank structure. However it was not a requirement. As a courtesy, the most senior spouses were asked first.

Our FSG leaders worked well as a team.

Most people coped well under stress.

Provide basic training on practical ways to deal with unreasonable people.

Battalion commander's wife contacted key people in the community who could help with rumor control. The employees of stores heard all kinds of things and were more than happy to pass on correct official information (video store and shoppette).

Family support was included as part of the battalion's METL. As such, the commanders were charged with forming strong company family support groups. The groups were run at company level and guided by the battalion command team (CO and CO's wife). Command emphasis on family support is a vital part of unit readiness.

The CSM and XO remained with skeleton battalion staff and companies which did not deploy. FSGs had not been active prior to deployment, so families did not know each other. Rear detachment started out slowly, but was reinforced when command structure returned.

SUSTAINMENT:

When we had poor attendance, I had to keep reminding myself that the cup was half full, not half empty. Those who came benefited. Nonetheless, it was disappointing to set up a nice program and have it attended poorly.

It took me about two weeks to realize that Family Support was not high on the list of things that a company commander must do and that I was not in their chain of command. So I took the only tact I knew--through the commander. I would tell my husband what I needed, when and why, and we would discuss realistic expectations. (I tend to think that my demands should take priority because, after all, I'm dealing with mothers and children.) Once we came to a compromise, he would pass on my written (always dated, for my records) request. It's amazing how well this worked. Once they "caught on", I later could pass the info to the S-1, who would then pass them out during a staff meeting (of course, in front of the CO). It was sad to see that requests for rosters, addresses, chains of concern, and newsletter info had such a low priority.

Upon arrival, I asked one of the generals' wives for a copy of the newsletter regulation. She acted surprised and said, "Don't ask. It's easier to ask for forgiveness than to ask for permission." With this guidance, I forged ahead and managed to stay out of trouble. Nonetheless, I did have to re-work several newsletters (wrapped in red tape). I also decided to keep all of our fund raisers in the battalion area so as to avoid the installation DPCA regulations requirements.

PRE-DEPLOYMENT:

Time crunch.

Lack of info due to classified info.

Uncertainty of exact deployment date.

Long duty hours--not enough time for families to get their affairs in order.

We worked all of these issues as openly as we could with honesty and sincerity. The situation was not ideal, but neither was the situation in Kuwait. We all coped. I promised the ladies that I would always tell them the truth and that I would pass on info as soon as I received it--thus the importance of good phone numbers and addresses. They must stay "plugged into" the system.

DEPLOYMENT:

Tracking people became a full-time job. If a wife moved and left no forwarding address, she would be lost from the system. Because bulk-rate mail (i.e., the newsletter) is not forwarded to

a new address or returned to sender, we had no way of telling whether or not info was received. I wrote a letter addressing this issue and sent it up the ranks--lost in the black hole--never heard anything back. Note: The battalion newsletter is considered a key link and one of the most valuable communication resources, yet it is relegated to the high status of "junk mail." This issue needs to be re-addressed. At least during deployments, it should be First Class. Reduce the size for First Class--no one needs a monthly 16-page (currently authorized) newsletter. I always had one of the longest, yet it never went over eight pages per issue.

Expect difficulties in tracking soldiers transferred to a MEDDAC unit due to illness or injury.

Facilities for meetings. Once the units all deployed, DEH began to close buildings down, once even turning off the water during a meeting. One of my first tantrums was after DEH winterized and began to close down the battalion classroom which was scheduled to have a Halloween party the following day. I discovered this by chance--no one told me or the rear detachment. This battle I won, but lost sleep and added another few gray hairs in the process. I continued to fight for use of this room throughout the deployment. I justified its remaining open due to its large size, ability to be divided with a partition, its accessibility to wives, its safety for children, its adaptability for parties, workshops, meetings, and briefings. The Learning Resource Center civil service employee had been with the battalion for many years and served as a great support for me and all of the ladies. He helped with microphones, video taping, video shows, and computer printouts. He also supported the other battalions now using this facility--about six. This was an on-going battle.

Dysfunctional families. These surfaced fairly quickly. Using the Army and community services available, plus many good, dedicated volunteers, these families developed new coping skills. Helping people to help themselves was our goal. By the end of the deployment, we were proud of the ladies who learned to speak English, drive a car, balance a checkbook, go to the commissary, and learned to better care for both themselves and their children. Hopefully by the end, most of the DEERS, ID Card, LES, CHAMPUS, EFMP, and immigration (yes, not all wives are U.S. citizens) paperwork had been completed. Luckily, we never had an opportunity to see how many had valid wills. Many made friendships that will last a lifetime.

Family Support finally on the "front burner". Commanders' wives now had "rank and position" because their job on the home front was important to the mission. The red tape was easier to cut through and active duty worked diligently with the commander's wife to get the job done. The attitude of "we're all in this together until the end" helped to develop great teams.

HOMECOMING:

Success--great pride--we all made it!!

The change of command was 2 1/2 months after redeployment, so we were still riding the crest of the wave when we left. I would imagine that there would be some post traumatic shock syndrome occurrences, some depression, some marital upheaval, and perhaps some abuse cases following the redeployment as the unit tried to readjust to peacetime. But other than the Operation Desert "Stork" which is affecting the unit daily, I have no information.

As you can tell, I was and still am excited about almost everything the unit did. I guess I'm still riding the crest of the wave. Many of the ideas I included in other areas:

- Secondary Chain of Support.

- Community involvement--Church, VFW, private citizens.

- Language support groups.

- Fill in the blank agendas for steering committee meetings.

- Church Adoption--great source of support, strength, and encouragement.

Other ideas:

Joined forces with another divisional support battalion for training/workshop/speaker programs. This cut down on the work we each had to do, enabled us to support each other (as commanders' wives, it can be lonely at the "top" --I use the word loosely), and also doubled the audience size. The battalions became used to working together and many friendships were formed.

A ladies' baseball team was formed--the Mrs. Fits-- unfortunately, once the men re-deployed, many ladies reluctantly withdrew. It was fun while it lasted. We even had cheerleaders and T-shirts on order.

Organized a six-battalion Easter Egg Hunt--cost each unit about \$18 because we bought in bulk. With each unit setting up one hunt area, it really was an easy way to go.

Successes: Problems often were handled at the lowest level and this fostered a feeling of comradeship. Therefore, not all problems were immediately elevated to battalion level to be solved.

Because this was a joint unit (Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force) we simply looked around and found that the best program (already established) was the Navy's Ombudsman Program.

PREDEPLOYMENT:

Determining whether or not the wife was going to stay in the area, and if not, when and where she was going. Often, we would

have a wife "disappear" as soon as her husband left for Saudi Arabia.

DEPLOYMENT:

Wives with no phones were very difficult to contact. Some would have their phones disconnected (without telling us) after their husband left. Infidelity, although not rampant, was not uncommon and when commonly known, made for uncomfortable situations for some group leaders. We had some marriages that were dissolved through the mail (this happened in both directions), and we had cases of wives who spent exorbitantly while their husband was gone, amassing huge bills upon his return. We had a few wives who left their husbands nothing but an empty house and a large debt upon their return.

We found that some of the very young wives of junior enlisted were hesitant to notify anyone if they had problems or questions. Sometimes this was a result of shyness, in other cases it was (incredibly) the result of the husband telling them not to call the unit because they thought it might reflect badly. In a few cases, we found that there were young wives of junior enlisted who had never even been on post because their husbands did not want them exposed to other soldiers.

We found that the wives of most NCOs and officers generally were mature, relatively financially secure, and "worldly" enough to take care of themselves. If and when I do this again, I have learned that the most vulnerable group, and the one that must be targeted, is the junior enlisted wives.

HOMECOMING:

The notification process, as to who was coming home and when, was completely broken. Probably the most accurate source was the wives themselves because husbands would often call from Saudi Arabia before they departed to let them know when they were to arrive. This led to much confusion because the military would get official word of returns, and the wives would get unofficial word. They often did not match, and made for frustrations on both sides.

Problems discussed in the deployment section often would be transparent to family support groups. On more than a few occasions, the first time that we found out about infidelities on the part of the wife, her departure from the area, or other problems was when the husband returned and became angry because he sensed that his family had not been properly "taken care of". This was not the case, but was occasionally the perception. We told departing soldiers that we would take care of their families, and to the extent that we knew of their problems, we did.

The following are not necessarily innovative, but nonetheless important and were validated during the eight months of Desert Shield/Storm.

- The most effective piece of the family support program is the small group, no more than eight to ten wives in a group, and the key is the leader of the group. She should be a volunteer. It is best if her husband is also deployed. Her husband's rank is not important. In fact, we found that the more "senior" the wife, the more intimidating she might be perceived, by virtue of that fact alone.

- My husband put out a monthly newsletter and mailed it to every wife in the battalion. Of course, this included the Desert Storm wives.

- The brigade's Family Action Care Team telephone bank operation was a very effective safety net to catch problems which we may not have detected. It was relatively sophisticated in that computer records were kept of all calls, problems discovered, and a system was in place to try to resolve those problems within days of discovering them.

- We used the DA Circular to set up the Family Support Group structure and found that it was pretty much on target.

- Each waiting spouse was assigned a "big sister" whose spouse wasn't deployed; success was a function of personalities.

During the PRE-DEPLOYMENT phase, each military wife was given a packet of information to be filled out with her spouse. The packet would supply the military wife with pertinent information such as where important documents were kept, information on financial matters, and bills to be paid, to mention a few. Many wives found this beneficial and they felt adequately prepared when their spouse deployed. Also during the pre-deployment phase, I felt the battalion level training given to our steering committee was worthwhile.

During DEPLOYMENT, a battalion-wide information meeting was scheduled with resource people from every facet of the military community.

During the HOMECOMING phase, we scheduled a presentation called "Life After Desert Storm." A community social services counselor conducted a discussion on reunion after a prolonged separation.

Although not particularly new or innovative, a few things worked very well.

By leaving a senior individual, who was experienced and professional, as rear detachment commander, we were able to be proactive and resolved many issues before they became problems.

The family support newsletter served as a great medium for advising families on the current status of our battalion as well as providing spouses with necessary information on military and community resources and the many activities that were being sponsored for military families.

The battalion's Family Support Groups did not have these kinds of classic deployment phases to respond to. Operation JUST CAUSE was a highly classified exercise designed to surprise Noriega and his forces, and consequently, it surprised all of us, too!

We did not have much direct support to our Family Support Groups, per se. However, one must consider that the entire military community was involved in continuing the support to the families in the theater. For example, the Southern Command Network (SCN) continued to broadcast on radio and television during the entire operation and such major facilities such as the commissary and the exchange closed and reopened again during the operation.

SUSTAINMENT: Battalion newsletter monthly.
Battery activities monthly.

PRE-DEPLOYMENT: Family briefings with all family support agencies in MILCOM.

DEPLOYMENT: NEO wardens visited every family! Delivered battalion newsletter monthly.

HOMEcoming: Welcome Home parties.

NOTE: There is a major problem in Germany because the soldiers (families) live so spread out in small communities and some can't afford phones.

Battalion-wide newsletter! Each battery submitted its column plus battalion chaplain, S-1, S-2, S-3, and S-4 wrote articles. Awards, birthdays, anniversaries, births were all listed. When you're so far from home, "Little things mean a lot!"

SUSTAINMENT:

Commander's wife took on the major responsibility, but she worked and was out of town, so there was no FSG. I had coffees, etc., for officers' wives (my husband was Chief of Staff). There should have been something for NCO and non-command sponsored wives.

I trained the wives to get jobs teaching English and got them students, also I let them know about various volunteer opportunities.

I think we all need to learn to utilize our resources and to let others know what those are. We don't need to reinvent the wheel - it's already been done and it works. I also feel the problems and successes are mostly due to preparation or the lack thereof. If we would only have everyone prepared like we did for this at all times, then the trauma of getting things done quick-

ly, or leaving things undone would be lessened. I also suggest that the areas of family support need to be done by needs assessment by the unit members--not necessarily just the leader's input. Our group met often and very informally during Desert Storm/Shield. We met formally twice a month, but this is what they wanted and needed. After all, it is their support group--not mine or yours. We need to remember to put the ownership of the group with the group not with the Commander, his wife or the support group leader.

These first few ideas are from Desert Storm/Shield. We asked the Deputy Commander for Operations to brief the wives on Mondays at lunch time. This briefing was taped and played for those who could not make it. This provided the families with an outing, but, most importantly the opportunity to hear from a blue suiter exactly what was happening. We could all spend some time together and update each other on how everyone was doing. We initiated a (bi-weekly at first, then later once a month) pot luck at the Family Support Center. We picked a theme for each one--i.e. Chinese, Mexican, Southern, etc. Babysitters for the little ones were students from the high school whose Dad's weren't gone; they just wanted to help. We decided that our frustration from not knowing when the unit would return needed to be put into a positive direction. Two of the wives came up with the idea of a raffle. One could pay a certain amount and then pick a date for the return. The money was used to buy some refreshments for the unit and an item for the wife.

I strongly suggest a change in FSG structure to move away from commander wife leadership to interested, qualified leaders appointed by CDRS at all levels of command. Keep the responsibility with the commander and not his wife--with wife assisting as suits each situation.

CHAPTER 3

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

The definition of a Family Support Group is as diverse as the people questioned. Each individual has personal thoughts of what the definition should be. However, there seem to be a few consistent traits that should be included. A Family Support Group should provide open two-way communication, up and down the chain of command. The group should provide a line of communication with the command (who "owns" the program) and should provide information on resources to the unit's families. The Family Support Group may also be a social group but that is not its primary function.

The structure of a Family Support Group also is diverse. It has revolved around something as unstructured as a coffee group to a structure of the leader being appointed by the C.O. with other key representatives forming the remainder of the leadership core.

Rear detachments ranged from "no rear detachment" to "token individual left behind" to "qualified and caring rear detachment left in place." From the responses, it is evident that Family Support Groups functioned with less difficulty and more confidence when the rear detachment was guided by someone who was qualified (knowledgeable in all areas) and did not view the job as something detrimental. In these cases the Family Support Group had positive experiences.

The most inconsistent area, from the responses, seems to be the training provided and/or required of the representatives of the Family Support Group. Training given or required ranged from: none provided, to training offered only for the commander's spouse, to extensive training required for all Family Support Group representatives.

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

- Two-way communication, up and down the chain of command
- Communication with command
- Resource for families
- Can be social

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP - WHAT IT SHOULD BE

- Outline of Requirements
 - A. Communication (up and down the chain of command)
 - 1. monthly newsletter

2. handbook
3. social
4. rosters
5. factual information

B. Education

1. social
2. orientation to unit and Army
3. volunteer training (on-going)
4. community resources (civilian/military)

C. Social contacts

1. emotional/spiritual support
2. welcoming/farewell

D. Crisis assistance referral

1. immediate response to an emergency
2. emotional support
3. professional referral

- Should teach family self sufficiency
- "Leader" merely contact person not controller
- Keep it simple
- Families assisting families
- It is necessary
- The nuts and bolts come from bottom up

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP - WHAT IT SHOULDN'T BE

- The responsible agent for keeping family rosters current
- Transportation for soldier's families not living on post (other than emergency)
- Babysitting service (other than emergency)
- A duplicator of the services of other agencies
- A solver of all problems
- Not just for times of crisis
- Substitute for professional services, i.e., counseling, moving, etc.

HOW WERE FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS STRUCTURED?

- It was standard operating procedure to have a designated rear detachment for every deployment and training exercise.

Volunteers representing each company united to participate in all meetings and functions. All ranks participated in the Family Support Group's organization/committees.

- Air Force has a full time "family support agency" at each installation, which encompasses a wealth of agencies open to and used by any military family.
- Level one - Bn commander wife (no CSM wife)
Level two - Company Commanders' wives
Level three - Contact people
- Because our entire unit did not deploy, my husband set up a Family Advisory Council. This council consisted of the XO, the unit chaplain, the adjutant, the company commanders and their wives, 1st sergeants and their wives, and volunteer enlisted wives. This council met quarterly. In addition, each troop had an informal advisory council which met monthly or quarterly. Besides the Family Advisory Council, I led the officer's wives coffee group. We met monthly to dispense information, work on projects, plan squadron social events, etc. I also led a quarterly CSM's wife, 1st Sgt wives and company commanders wives group. We met to plan moneymaking activities, etc. This group served as the jumping off point for similar groups in each company. These groups were run by the company commander's wife/1st Sergeant wives in tandem.
- The Family Support Center at Dyess had just come on line the year prior to Desert Shield. The Support Center had a director, deputy director, volunteer coordinator, financial manager, family counselors, military liaison, family services and many assorted services. The base chaplain took the reins as leader of the Family Support Group when Desert Shield began. The support center was the framework for his group.
- The structure was very formal until it got down to the battery level. I left it up to each battery commander's wife and their 1SG's wife to set up their own "chain of concern."
- The commander's wife served as the Bn level representative. Our CSM's wife didn't live in the area, but our XO's wife served as back-up. Each company was represented by two individuals, usually the commander's and 1SG's wives. HHC was represented by the commander's wife and one rep from the company itself and one rep from the staff. Each company had volunteers who served as telephone callers.

During the Desert Storm deployment, this group was really the heart of the Battalion. We learned to rely heavily on each other and the Family Assistance Center, since we had no rear detachment.

- The rear detachment, a major, scheduled FSG meetings once every three weeks, typed, updated phone rosters, stayed in phone contact with spouses who had left the area. For phone

roster, rear detachment contacted CO's wife who then phoned husband's deputy's wife and the SGM's wife, who initiated calls that continued through the phone tree (randomly organized officer's and NCO's spouses). For FSG meetings, the rear detachment and CO's wife "shared" the duties. Both had information to share and pass out handouts. Other FSG members helped run certain parts of meetings too.

- Each battery had an officer's and enlisted wives rep so that they had access to all channels of communication. This rep was rarely the senior wife in the battery. People didn't take it too seriously until it looked like they would deploy to Saudi Arabia. CO held a meeting to reinforce the FSG at that point. He appointed a Bn coordinator who was a motivated enlisted wife. He set her up an office when the unit was ready to deploy. This worked very well, CO was able to call her and have her initiate calls to all wives reporting that everyone was o.k. He says she "held it together" while they were deployed.
- Eight member council including company reps, a treasurer, editor, child care coordinator and hospitality person. The BN commander's wife was the adviser.
- The CO's wife and the CSM's wife were co-advisors. Each company had two reps, a treasurer, and a baby layette coordinator. CO's wife ran monthly information meetings but the chaplain, S-3 and S-1 did most of the talking when they were not deployed. The chaplain reserved the room, set up chairs and provided refreshments out of FSG funds. Rear detachment did so when soldiers were deployed. Socials when husbands were deployed for more than two weeks.
- The individual troop was responsible for the families of their deployed soldiers. A sponsor from that troop was assigned to each family for liaison and communication purposes Activities for the families came at troop level. The troops were encouraged by installation to keep the Desert Storm families in the mainstream of the troop life and not single them out for special isolated Desert Storm activities.

Squadron and Regiment provided any/all support requested by the troops. Rosters were updated at squadron on a monthly basis on the Desert Storm families.

- The FSG was set up as a council of civilian volunteers and active duty personnel. This consisted of a president, secretary, treasurer, newsletter editor, one company representative per company (4) and 2 advisors (battalion commander's and CSM's wives). The active duty personnel were the battalion commander, CSM, battalion executive officer, 4 company commanders, 4 first sergeants, and the chaplain.

Council meetings were held monthly. FSG meetings (all soldiers and families) bi-monthly. Family support newsletter

released on months with no FSG meeting. Family support group social occasions - battalion Christmas party, family day in field during battalion FTX, and battalion organization day.

Companies scheduled independent events (i.e. Easter socials and homecoming parties).

- Each major command had a Family Support Group with the Commander's wives as the leaders. This ranged from a company level, battalion level to Bde level. Then our community had a community wide group that was led by chaplains, a battalion commander's wife and waiting wives coordinator from ACS.
- Brigade level rear detachment dispersed information to brigade FSG leader. The brigade FSG leader notified the battalion FSG leader. The battalion FSG leader notified the company reps who notified the platoon reps who notified spouses within the platoon. We had monthly FSG meetings at battalion level (or as needed). Monthly company FSG meetings.
- Co-chairs were junior officer and enlisted wives.
- The battalion commander's wife was advisor or resource person for the company commanders wives and 1st SGT wives who led the FSG. They formed a core that organized activities, wrote newsletters, etc.
- The FSG structure mirrored the chain of command. There were 1-2 people representing the batteries and the CSM wife and myself. Each battery elected to take care of their own. After one month, all decided to meet and work together.
- Our FSG was headed by a board that was comprised of officers (pres., vp., sec., treas.) elected by the spouses and advisors (BC, XO--when they weren't deployed--and their wives), and two representatives from each of the units. The board would meet monthly with the rear detachment officer and the chaplain when we were lucky enough to have one assigned. At this time, activities for the battalion families were planned, fund raisers organized, etc. During deployments, monthly meetings were held for battalion families (childcare provided). Hopefully there was a briefing by the rear detachment officer and a special program, either entertaining or informational. In addition, the individual units usually met socially on a monthly basis. Funds were provided from the Family Support Group treasury to defray the costs of refreshments. The Family Support Group, the rear detachment, and the chain of command were the three elements of the family support structure.
- The basic structure followed that of the active duty chain of command in that the battalion commander's wife headed a steering committee which met as needed. The committee was made up of two or three representatives from each company (usually the company commander's wife and one or two other members), the XO's wife, the chaplain, the CSM's wife and the

treasurer. Other field grade wives were invited so as not to show favoritism to the XO. Each company had one vote. I did not vote nor did the other members. If there was a problem getting a vote, we tabled the issue to be brought back to the companies and discussed at their meetings. We would then vote on it at the next meeting. I acted as a facilitator and idea generator; I tried not to push my ideas through, but rather let the majority rule. If something were really important to me, I would discuss it with the XO's wife and CSM's wife and ask for support when the topic was raised. On several occasions, active duty members were also present. They were always welcomed and often had very good input. Nonetheless, the vote stayed the same--one per company.

We had quarterly "all wives" functions which were hosted on a rotating basis by the companies. Most family support activity was on the company level.

- I became the de facto family support leader of my husband's deactivated tank battalion. Other ladies took on the role of leader for each of the other three deactivated battalions. These ladies were not necessarily Desert Storm wives and were not necessarily wives of senior officers or NCO's. The next tier consisted of volunteer ladies who were small group leaders with eight to ten Desert Storm wives in each group. Although we did not mandate that they be Desert Storm wives, it was encouraged (most were).

We tried to organize the groups by unit, although this was not a strict rule. We wanted to get groups organized who knew each other already, whose husbands were serving in the same place in Saudi Arabia, who lived near each other, or who had other things in common which might encourage group dynamics. A small number switched groups early on when we thought they might do better in another group.

The "heart" of the operation was at the small group leader level. This lady was really the "glue" that held her group together. We asked that she call each member of her group weekly and visit on occasion. She was a conduit of information both up and down. We tried to get groups together at least once a month for ACS updates, or just socially.

We also established groups of wives who had departed the area and a group leader would still contact them by phone to check on them. We did this from the brigade's family action care team location so that government phones were used for long distance.

- The basic structure of our Family Support Group consisted of a core group of contact people known as the battalion steering committee. This group was comprised of the commander's wife, the CSM's wife, other command groups wives, four battery commander's wives, and four ISG wives (or those acting in that capacity). The group met monthly to iron out any major

problems, to be briefed and trained in matters of family support, and to plan battalion-wide activities.

Following the monthly meeting, each battery commander's wife would meet with their respective batteries to disseminate information about the deployment, plan small family support gatherings, and get people involved in battalion-wide activities. Many batteries set up a system pairing neighbors to check on one another.

The batteries did an admirable job, through their volunteer contact people, checking on family members to see if they were experiencing any difficulties. Any major problems that could not be resolved within the battery were brought to the attention of the commander's wife, CSM's wife or the rear detachment.

- Each company had own support group. No battalion or brigade support groups.
- Each company commander was responsible for his/her FSG. There were three companies.

There was always an active FSG, even though its structure changed according to circumstances. There was a volunteer leader. The wife of the battalion XO or battalion S-3 co-chaired the senior leadership with a senior NCO wife.

Battalion commander attended meetings whenever possible as an equal to the XO's wife, so people knew he cared. The XO's wife always had direct access to him although she felt more comfortable scheduling a weekly meeting with him to keep him informed.

- 2nd MAW: At the wing level a funded position is filled and has responsibility for training perspective key wives in a 36 hour course of instruction. This person also helps individual unit coordinators plan events, if needed, and acts as a resource person for newsletters, etc. Under wing is the Group Family Readiness Officer (FRO--additional duty for Capt. or Lt.) and group key wives coordinator. The Group FRO and group coordinator are predominately used during whole unit deployments.

Finally, there is the squadron FRO (same additional duty as group level) and squadron key wives coordinator. At the squadron level there are additional wives (key wives) who have volunteered and been selected by the CO--they and all the above must attend the training classes.

Squadron key wives are responsible for their unit's program. These may be different unit to unit, but are decided on with the CO's guidance, the coordinator and additional key wives. Once the goals are set they may include all or a portion of the following:

- maintain current personnel roster, publish newsletter

(monthly/quarterly), establish telephone tree,
- maintain unit answering machine, relay referral/
resource information, welcome new squadron members,
- sponsor and plan all-wives/family activities, fund-
raising activities, sponsor homecoming and homecoming
activities, hospitality committee and birthday cards/
births.

- Four officers and three major chairs functioned as an executive group--other chairs took on special projects or tasks. Executive committee met every two weeks--often by phone. Group meetings every four weeks.
- At ARCOM level we formed a volunteer exec. committee comprised of 5 trained officers (volunteer civilian family members) and 8 regional coordinators, also trained. This committee had a mission to organize and train new FSG's and disseminate information from the ARCOM and family when problems occurred.
- We had two developed area support group programs and area contact people.

The battalion is a 600 member unit geographically dispersed throughout the state of Arizona. A family support group was established in Phoenix, where some 100 spouses and 200 service members reside, one was established in Tucson, where some 200 service members reside and spouses and third large concentration of service members and their families resided at Ft. Huachuca, Arizona.

We had area contact people (in each area) and a calling tree program designed by zip code breakdown.

Our support groups received information from the battalion commander's spouse as information was updated and passed on. Lists of area contact people and their telephone numbers were mailed directly to the unit members home address and were also passed out at pre-mobilization family readiness briefings our battalion held last fall.

- FSG maintained within each company at their discretion; functioned very well!
- During Desert Storm structure was formalized: core leaders, CO leaders (CDR's wife and CSM's wife initially), 2 leaders within each company (1 officer 1 enlisted), geographical area leaders--who were contact people because of the distance between family members--newsletter editor and her writers.
- The company CDR wives and 1SG wives were being trained for leadership at the company level in seminars.
- Officers and three chairman functioned as executive committee.
- Volunteer participation of officer wives and Drill SGT wives.

- Council: CO's wife, Co. Cdr wives, Staff wives, NCO rep. Staff led by XO's wife, C Company 1SG, B Company 1SG, A company 1SG. We would have a council meeting to get organized or plan Bn wide projects and functions. Chain of concern and social functions were handled by the individual companies.
- FSG was operated by the willing representatives from the companies (usually the company CDR's wife and the 1SG wife).
- FSG essentially run by committee and consensus.
- (OCONUS) Worked by battery. Chain of concern per battery. Two to three volunteers (coordinators) per battery.
- (OCONUS) Being single, CO first asked his XO's wife if she would be the battalion FSG leader. She accepted. There were also company commander and first sergeant spouses who were leaders at the company level. His companies held evening meetings every six to eight weeks, which he attended.
- (OCONUS) The structure was a division of the unit by flights (four different) consisting of approximately 5-10 people, support personnel of approximately 20 people, and attached people of approximately 14 people. These divisions were the core of the Family Support Group. These groups met as individual groups and also met as a whole at least quarterly. These divisions were primarily organized by job types (of active duty member) and were one of the sources for information passing and referrals. The family support group of the unit was a coffee group, a social group, a chain of concern, a welcoming/baby shower group, and just about any and all things that the members of the unit wanted it to be. The officer's wives met at least once a month as a separate group and the enlisted wives met at least once a month as a separate group.
- (OCONUS) There was an informal gathering of wives 3-4 weeks but no structured family support group.... The ACS director was a major factor in seeing that the meetings continued.
- (OCONUS) Made up of waiting spouses, who chose among themselves an information person who did flyers monthly and two people who planned events. A hospital auxiliary board member was liaison to the family support group. All officer and enlisted spouses were invited; all enlisted wives chose not to attend. Enlisted wives began to meet monthly, as a coffee group. Group had an event every weekend.
- (OCONUS) Family Support Group structure started at brigade level. Brigade commander's wife held meetings with battalion commanders wives to pass information and guidance. At battalion we held meetings at least quarterly with company commanders and/or first sergeant wives. At company level, meetings were held monthly. Meetings were primarily to pass

information on future deployments etc. They were also used as social gatherings. At battalion level we decided on major events.

FSG STRUCTURE - REAR DETACHMENT

- Our whole division left Ft. Hood for the desert, but they left back representatives of each brigade-sized unit to be our "Family Action Center" or rear detachment for the families. This consisted of one officer (usually a Captain) and 3-4 NCOs. There were also several soldiers from each battalion, but they were there to maintain the Army side of the division - taking inventory and guarding the buildings and materials left behind. The officer left behind for our brigade was from brigade headquarters and not from the battalion. I would have preferred someone from the battalion, but realize my husband needed them more than our families did. I dealt with the captain left behind more than I did with the NCOs.
- Normal wing command element was in place. The rear detachment completed all mission requirements. There were no problems.
- My husband selected his rear detachment commander immediately after the alert. He left his S-1, a senior Lt, and two senior NCOs to handle the majority of the work. Five junior NCOs were left--one per company--to assist. There were 8-10 other soldiers left back who were non-deployable. Our rear detachment commander was great. The CO's wife, company commander/1sgt wives met weekly with him. He basically handled our newsletter. Each company submitted their articles and information. The letter was typed and run-off for mailing at the battalion.
- We had a Captain as rear detachment commander who had company command experience. He also had an acting 1SG. He was responsible for battalion activities when the unit deployed and was available to FSG at all times. Because of his command experience he knew how agencies worked on post.
- My husband appointed a permanent rear detachment commander. He was an E-6 with 17 years experience. A medical profile kept him from field duty. He was great! The young spouses trusted him. He knew how the system worked and kept me informed on every deployment. During Just Cause, we spoke almost every day.
- Command structure remained in place at Ft. Knox. There was not a rear detachment but each troop commander remained in communication with their deployed soldiers and provided support to their soldiers' families who remained at Ft. Knox.
- In every deployment other than Saudi, there was a command structure left behind. The rear detachment was on the brigade level. The rear detachment officer during the first part of the deployment to Saudi left much to be desired (unresponsive

to FSG needs and did not offer leadership to others left behind). Replacement rear detachment officer was superb (happened to be single and female). During other deployments, the command structure worked perfectly as rear detachment.

- Excellent rear detachment at battalion and brigade levels. There was a Captain who had just relinquished company command who was left as rear detachment commander. For each company one person was left in the rear as their company's primary POC. All wives knew their company POC and notified them with their problems. The POCs, in turn, kept FSG leaders informed. This also worked from, company rep to rear detachment. FSG leaders worked with POCs to resolve problems.
- It was usually an NCO who was not deployable due to transition or health. The rear detachment was fair to good.
- In all deployments there was a rear detachment. The rear detachments did a commendable job during all deployments.
- The rear detachment consisted of a brand new 2LT and SFC. The rear detachment had a lot of ups and downs. Both service members were anxious to help alleviate burdens, anxiety, and whatever they could do to help.
- The battalion rear detachment was left (1 NCO and several EMS, all non-deployable) for property book purposes only, and rarely (only if caught and cornered) interacted with family support issues. Being a divisional battalion, we had no brigade at the post. We were therefore assigned to 2d Brigade, 1st Cav, for family support purposes. This, for all intents and purposes, was the unit rear detachment. The division had set up its own FAC and divided it up into separate detachments, A through F, each detachment having four to five battalions under its guidance. The Captain in charge of the detachment assumed responsibility for the commander for each battalion and was in charge of all family problems, all soldiers left behind, all property, all correspondence with troops in the field, and anything else that might affect the units on the home front. Luckily the Captain in charge of Detachment C, where we were assigned, was brilliant and we developed a very close relationship. If it were not for his total caring, professional attitude and his total knowledge of the system, our family support group would have had many more difficulties.
- Because this was a separate battalion, there was always a rear detachment left behind. It worked very well--no problems.
- When the unit deployed to Saudi, a seasoned Sergeant Major who had spent several years with the battalion, was left as the rear detachment commander. He was ably assisted by an NCOIC, a personnel/administrative specialist and a team of eight to ten full-time men. The rear detachment functioned extremely well. They worked hand in hand with our family support

network, assisting in all areas and assuming the burden for any major problems that were to develop, i.e., a rape occurred in our battalion during the deployment. The rear detachment was proactive in the correlation and distribution of family support newsletters, questions attending battalion-level steering committee meetings, assisting in planning battalion-wide activities, checking regularly on family members, and handling major problems as described above. We were extremely successful in this endeavor. No major problems developed with the rear detachment.

- (OCONUS) We were fortunate to have a competent, caring former battery commander as our RDO when the battalion went to Southwest Asia. There were also a couple of senior NCOs one of which served as rear detachment during normal field operations. A few other soldiers who stayed behind for medical reasons also helped.
- (OCONUS) Unit did not deploy as a group--only portions at a time from the medical group. "Rear detachment" was a captain with a phone located a 2 1/2 hour drive away. Frequently she didn't return phone calls unless the colonel called her. She was "rear detachment" for six different medical units, each deployed from different places to different places. Usually she had no information.
- (OCONUS) Rear detachments left for regular scheduled training deployments worked fairly well. If they weren't doing their jobs, their commanders could be advised by telephone and the commander could affect a proper response. During Desert Shield/Storm, our rear detachment consisted of mail clerk, E-5, and E-2. In addition there were several non-deployable soldiers with profiles who just "hung out" at the battalion.
- (OCONUS) There was always a rear detachment available, as he was also the community commander.
- (OCONUS) The battalion designated a very capable, caring captain as rear detachment commander. He had completed company command in the battalion and just recently graduated after three months at CAS³. Each company left behind an NCO (some more capable and caring than others) to handle company business.

WHAT TRAINING WAS AVAILABLE?

- Training was offered during the deployment for "Just Cause" and "Desert Shield/Desert Storm". This involved medical and psychological support from the medical activity. Counseling was provided for tragedy preparedness and in the event of loss of life. Financial and general information distribution services were provided. Training included commander and CSM wives, and volunteers from the FSG network at the unit level.

- Family support center extended hours and trained volunteers for a 24-hour crisis line.
- CO and spouse trained at CTS. Seminar group required to develop a family support plan. Other FSG members received OJT training.
- Volunteers received no training.
- Trainers came from a family support center to show a film and field questions about setting up a family support group. We had a class on how to do newsletters. We had social workers talk to us about stress management. We had casualty notification training/understanding grief by chaplains and more. Most of these training sessions were to be attended by the Commander's wife or her designated representative. Many of the people doing the training sessions were willing to do a similar session for each separate battalion and their key contact people.
- Our Company Commanders' wives had one day of training--group dynamics, leadership styles, fund raising, company expectations, etc.--at the time that their husbands took command. Although our FSG structure was in place at the time of our deployments, our volunteers had only community resource training. At the time of Desert Storm, our family life chaplains and social workers coordinated a series of training sessions for any and all volunteers, including such modules as community resource information, a friend to friend workshop (how to handle others' problems without becoming entrenched yourself), etc.
- No training. One spouse (NCO wife) volunteered at ACS and she was a tremendous source of help for our FSG (where to go and who to see for different types of help).
- Stress training was available.
- ACS had some training but it was during the day and wives couldn't take off work to attend. CO advocated training videos. CO felt that he could get the group to watch some videos on how to set up an FSG and how to handle situations etc. easier than he could get them to read manuals.
- No training provided. Two day training seminar provided by a division FSG office. Covered leadership skills, agency support, lessons learned, phone trees, etc. Most training done by volunteers from established FSGs.
- I spent many hours reassuring the unit contact team of my confidence in them. The unit contact team had little or no training.

- A "mandatory" training session was held for key squadron staff and spouses, troop commander and spouse, 1SG and spouse, and the sponsors assigned to the Desert Storm families. Training was provided by squadron and regiment chaplains and the family life coordinator from ACS. Replacement sponsors received individual training from their troop commanders when assigned as a new sponsor.
- The battalion commander and wife were the only ones initially "trained" in family support (PCC at Ft. Leavenworth). Volunteers were offered the opportunity to attend post-wide bi-monthly FSG meetings which gave some insight into problem identification and resolution. Our FSG president and I attended the bi-monthly Ft. Bragg-wide family support council meetings chaired by the Deputy Corps Commander.
- Our ACS staff was excellent and trained volunteers when able. Some individuals refused training in the beginning.
- Ft. Hood had a well organized training program. During the family support conference, it seemed to me that many of the suggestions had been implemented at Ft. Hood, including grief counseling workshops, community wide information briefings.
- I had "training" meetings (discussions, suggestions, samples) for anyone who was interested in becoming involved in our chain of concern.
- All of the COSCOM training sessions were limited to FSG leaders wives and sometimes CSM's wife or one other person. They were limited because of space available and no time/personnel to offer more sessions.
- The battalion commander and wife attended the pre-command course, which was not really "training". Volunteers did not receive training.
- Training provided by the commander's spouse only--OJT.
- At the beginning of Desert Shield/Storm, only the wives of LTCs and above received training and were expected to take this back to coffee groups and FSGs. Then company commanders' wives and 1SG wives were included in training. Some FSG had trained counselors come and speak to their FSGs.
- Some training was provided by the military community through the family assistance center. Most FSG seemed to develop and create their own training and structure as the need arose with different phases of Operation Desert Shield/Storm.
- There was no formal training except schools in conjunction with soldier schools. Some specific courses were offered through ACS, but there was little interest shown.

- Training: on-going training needs to be made available and it needs to be consistent.
- We had several speakers come to the unit to speak on employment, travel, CPR, etc. We probably would have had a financial counselor and career planners come if the men had not deployed. There were speakers available through ACS. We had programs on survivors' benefits, casualty notification, stress management, child psychology, and coping skills at the battalion level. I taught one class to the Casualty Assistance Volunteers on grief management. The installation began seminars using the personnel from the drug and alcohol office on death notification, survivors' benefits, and grief management once the air war began. They were offered on a continuing basis and all battalion personnel were encouraged to attend. Once re-deployment began, this course emphasized "reunion training."
- Training done by unit and coordinated with Post support groups.
- The brigade commander's wife and Post Chaplains trained the volunteers for the Family Action Care Team. I had a guide book prepared by my husband's battalion and DA circular to advise on issues related to family support groups. We also had training sessions for group leaders with ACS and other post facilities staff.
- The training was ongoing. In early October, our core group of battalion contact people received training in family support from a qualified individual from Washington, DC. The only problem with this was that by the time we met with this individual, most family support groups were already in place and functioning. The training was too late. This same group of individuals attended casualty briefings in order to prepare them for their role if our forces were to suffer casualties. Commanders wives and CSM's wives received additional training on how to construct and distribute a family support newsletter and on military and community resource availability. In addition to this, I conducted a training session prior to the deployment for the battalion level steering committee. These individuals were given notebooks of information on how to handle emergencies during duty and non-duty hours. A quick-reference sheet was provided to help the contact person know what resources were readily available. A supply of call sheets was given to each contact person in our core group. When a problem arose, they were to record the name of the caller, the nature of the problem, the action taken and the follow-up. These call sheets were regularly reviewed by the rear detachment commander and myself.
- Informal training.
- The XO's wife gave the company commanders' wives PCC training information that she had acquired.

- In 2d MAW, training was the same for all participants regardless of the husband's rank. All participants were required to take a 36 hour family readiness/Key Wives class. (The first section is very similar to the leadership-communication class offered at USAWC). Periodic updates were also available and unit coordinators were given the opportunity to take an additional class dealing further with group dynamics and leadership.
- I believe in training.
- No formal training. Strictly OJT!
- Training was available through the family support center or personal affairs people. I gathered resources on where to go for what, agencies responsibilities, etc. and presented these to the individual group leaders.
- Specific training in areas of conflict management, handling problems, etc was not requested. Our family support was the warm fuzzy, supporting type. Our unit requested training for all unit members--not just the family support leaders.
- We conducted a joint workshop with the National Guard and it worked great. Active duty reservists attended also giving us a uniformity in teaching. Fourth Army also had a workshop for selected volunteer delegates along with a soldier who was able to come back to HQ and our FSG and impart his perceptions from Saudi Arabia. We in turn continued to teach volunteers at the FSG level.
- Training for volunteers was available more during Desert Storm than during normal deployments.
- The Bn Commanders' wives received pre-command course training. We began training Company Commander and First Sergeant wives.
- Volunteers in ACS and community volunteer specific jobs were trained.
- No training. As a teacher, I received training in trauma skills from the hospital.
- Only two sessions.
- No volunteer training.
- Orientation provided to new arrivals in SLC Bn for spouse as husband received special on FSG. Company reps given 3 day training.
- One of my chief complaints of the ODS deployment was that I personally was not equipped to handle the things being thrust upon me - people's financial problems, child care problems, emotional instability of some spouses. I kept saying that I

had no training in social work and that is what I was being asked to do. Eventually the FAC began to have some sessions for volunteers--especially about bereavement and grief; they also held homecoming workshops.

- No formal training for FSG. Corps/Post wide meetings. At battalion we held classes on finances, taxes, checking account, etc.
- I asked the installation volunteer coordinator to come to our third meeting. She talked to the spouses about the different types of volunteer jobs available. She told them to keep track of FSG for volunteer credit. I was very proud that our unit had a disproportionately high number of very dedicated Red Cross/school volunteers and I credit her coming to talk to us for this.
- No training available.
- (OCONUS) FSG volunteers were inexperienced and the only training was what I offered.
- (OCONUS) The only training was for myself at the PCC. We had a guest speaker on stress during one meeting.
- (OCONUS) Before Desert Shield/Storm, training resources for volunteers working the FSGs was poor. Our training consisted of good handouts and literature. The professionals (ACS, Red Cross, some of the alcohol and drug counselors) were just not knowledgeable. The occasions we tried to use ACS for training were a disaster. In November 1990, when the word came down that 1 AD would deploy, we did have several small sessions on being a good listener, and the role of contact people. Our resource people for these sessions were a Post Chaplain and ACS person from Nuremburg. They were good but we needed much more.
- (OCONUS) The commanders' wife didn't attend the precommand course. No training was available for anyone else.
- (OCONUS) Most of our spouses arrived with very little family support experience or training. No training was offered other than the training offered by the CO's wife to the leaders of our FSG.

CHAPTER 4

WHAT WORKED?

For all of the positive accomplishments of Family Support structures, what most often receives the attention is the negative aspects or incidents. Thus, problem areas are almost always spoken simultaneously with the mere mention of Family Support Groups in units throughout both CONUS and OCONUS. This is unfortunate, for there are many, many success stories of Family Support Groups in units throughout both CONUS and OCONUS.

Some of the successes of Family Support Groups are captured here in "What Worked". These successes are grouped under the following: Activities/Social Events, Communication, Outside Unit Support, Rear Detachments, FSG Structure, and Briefings/Training. The situations within the areas are further denoted geographically, CONUS and OCONUS. Although many situations are similar in both locations, different cultures and climates have different needs and require varied resources.

ACTIVITIES/SOCIAL EVENTS

- The annual Christmas party - approximately 400 children attended - much of the money was raised by the wives (all ranks) in food sales.
- FSG parties with focus on children's activities paid dividends.
- Family-oriented activities were the norm during sustainment.
- Monthly FSG meetings - always for all with something fun planned and then something educational thrown in; free food.
- Our biggest activity was a children's Halloween party in which the soldiers (single and married) and wives of all six companies were involved. Each company decorated its' headquarters (all located together with doors facing a common courtyard, shared with Bn Headquarters) and created a Haunted House or Halloween game. The Bn Headquarters had the food, the costume contest and face painting. The atmosphere was something like a carnival, and I believe the single soldiers had more fun than even the kids did!
- At company level parties, individuals brought portable TVs and VCRs. We made copies of any videotapes sent from Saudi, news shows where our guys appeared, and TV specials featuring the 24th ID!! These functions provided a reason to get together.
- One of my proudest memories: To celebrate our pride in our accomplishments as military wives and mothers, I offhandedly suggested at an FSG meeting that a group of members might want to make a "Wives" banner. When they finished, it was one of

the most beautiful creations that I've ever seen; they quilted it and hand stitched the Battalion crest. We took it everywhere with us, and it hung at Cottrell Field for the Brigade's Homecoming.

- I also started a prayer group on Thurs AM for anyone in the Bn who was interested. We met at the chapel activity center and had babysitting. We averaged about 10 each Thursday--mostly the Co Commanders's wives and several jr. enlisted wives.
- Each company planned its own Homecoming party. I was amazed at the decorations and amount of food. (Most donated by local restaurants.)
- Our soldiers returned within a 2-week time frame--we decorated office banners, signs, etc. Their exact return time varied; they did not all come home on the same plane. There was no group homecoming at the plane. Rear Detachment continuously informed wives of when a plane was due. After return: wives sent cookies, cakes, and snacks to the unit for "our guys"! This was a very well supported part of homecoming. We had many PCSs soon after homecoming, but we had one well-attended picnic the first month after they came home.
- The post hosted daily ceremonies with the band and guest speakers to welcome home every plane load of returning soldiers. Our squadron hosted a fantastic "fire and smoke" video show and award ceremony for the returning soldiers. The squadron was wild with tears and handshakes.
- Homecoming went extremely well, and all spouses participated. We decorated the airfield hangar, all barracks, the dining facility and Hqs building. Made plans for Welcome Home and Recognition dinner for the whole Battalion. Any family member who made any contribution to the FSG system was recognized and thanked (including parents, fiancées, and friends in the civilian community).
- Getting people involved.
- Homecoming party.
- Unit parties at Christmas, Easter, softball picnics.
- During the lengthy deployments we attempted to hold two functions per month, one with children, one adults only.
- At Christmas, both years, we sent ornaments, etc., to make Japan and Saudi more like home.
- A cookbook was put together during the last 7-month deployment. Participation was high. The organizing committee consisted of volunteers other than key wives.

- Large turnouts: 60,000 at welcome home parade, 500 soldiers and family members at dinner dance.
- Generally a happy time; wives did special things in Bn areas--banners, signs, cookies, etc.
- (OCONUS) We organized sending cards to the men for the holidays, along with candies. We also sent a birthday cookie to the desert for those who had a birthday in that given month. The Chapel sent stationery, Valentine cards and candies, cookies and items for Easter. One of the fiancées in the United States sent us some "We Support Our Troops" stickers. We put these up everywhere and the entire base decorated with yellow ribbons.
- (OCONUS) Soldiers and spouses (especially soldiers, the CO and Spouse of HSC Cdr) donated time, money, toys, hospital supplies, and a Christmas party with all the trimmings for 300 children in a local civilian hospital. Our engineer soldiers had previously worked in that town. This one-time connection with the town blossomed into a year round affiliation. Also FSG donated toys and many household items to refugees during Just Cause.
- (OCONUS) End of month potlucks held in the early evening in the company dayroom during deployment. Children were in an adjoining room with sitters; wives relaxed and met others who lived near or had something else in common. These were well attended. NCOs handed out LESSs, RDC would give update or sometimes show a video from the field.
- (OCONUS) Soldiers appreciated baked goods.
- (OCONUS) Making signs: each company (spouses) got together to make welcome home signs; good activity to further unite them. Making food: soldiers, especially single soldiers, appreciated the effort.
- (OCONUS) From donations and fund raisers, the FSG was able to fund a Mother's day out. One Saturday per month, the mothers could drop their children at the Post Childcare Center and have a few hours of free time. This proved to be expensive, but we thought very worthwhile. Another idea we were pursuing was to establish some sort of Big Brother/Big Sister for the older children. This was more intended for the boys, as it seemed they were missing their dads and needed someone to do "Guy stuff" with. The unit returned before this got off the ground.
- (OCONUS) Each month the individual units could request funds from the Family Support Group treasury (\$50 limit). Different units used the funds for refreshments, postage to mail a special package to the unit for holiday, a skating trip, a Valentine banner to mail to the unit, etc. It was great for

the families to be able to participate with little personal expense.

- (OCONUS) Soldiers' rooms: decorated and made beds for return.
- (OCONUS) Battalion parties held by the FSG were supported by raffle funds. Troops supported this effort. Remaining money was evenly divided among the five companies.
- (OCONUS) Had organized Family Support Day with representatives from: Red Cross for blood donors, PX, ID cards, etc.
- (OCONUS) Both our battalion and the Germans had clubs on post.
- (OCONUS) We invited families out to see the planes take off. This gave families an opportunity to actually see DAD in his jet and then to see him take off.

COMMUNICATION

- Encouraged young wives to keep busy and kept the lines of communication open so we'd know if anyone needed help. Offered activities for wives so that they could share ideas and not feel isolated during the weekly absence.
- We decided to send each of our soldiers a personalized Christmas card. We had a special Battalion card printed by a local printer (we traded the printing costs for some work by a couple of wives in the battalion--no out of pocket cost!!) and had a singing party one afternoon with children and pizza. We had to relinquish the idea of personalized cards since we had no accurate and complete list of soldiers assigned to the Battalion after four months of deployment. We were afraid to hurt someone's feelings by leaving him out, so we instead addressed each card to "_____, Our Favorite Soldier from Alpha Company" (or something similar) and boxed them by company and sent them to 1SGs of each company for distribution. We heard they were a big hit!!
- The Patriot, the 24th ID newspaper donated a two-page spread each week to a different brigade (or group of Separate Battalions). We then filled those pages with stories and pictures of the Bns within the Brigade. The papers were, of course, distributed on Post but were also sent (in great quantities) to Saudi. In addition, the paper began taking subscriptions from out-of-towners. Many parents of soldiers subscribed for the duration of the war.
- We were able to set up telephone times to call Saudi and speak to our husbands for 10 mins. This occurred only when no fighting was going on, but it helped tremendously. Phone bills were outrageous, however. This idea helped morale more than anything we did (both for guys deployed and wives left

behind). Communications solved a lot of problems, but also created a few.

- Each company sent videos of their Christmas party to the soldiers in Saudi.
- Information was passed to me from the Division Cdr's wife. This information I passed on via phone tree or at meetings. Met monthly with her. Briefings were held at least monthly in post theater for all spouses in all units. At these briefings, MP's, ACS, Red Cross, Division CDR or his representative gave updates on Saudi and other pertinent information.
- Sent a letter to every wife and parent before returning.
- Newsletters--SITREP's from the field. The longer the soldiers were out the more precious became information from the field.
- Chains of Concern were kept up to date.
- We had to stay in touch with these wives as much as possible without interfering with their privacy. Some needed/wanted to talk more than others. On a weekly basis these 35 wives could expect calls from either their unit sponsor, 1SG, or Troop Commander's wife or myself.
- Taped information message on machine at the Battalion Hqs phone was updated at least weekly. This number was published in every newsletter.
- Chains of Concern worked. Battalion meetings held monthly. Also, weekly meetings with key FSG leaders, Brigade and Battalion Commander's wives and Rear Detachment personnel from Brigade and Battalion.
- At Corps level, meetings were held to disseminate information. The Family Assistance Center (FAC) provided free tickets and transportation to ballgames, miniature golf, etc. Childcare centers extended hours and reduced prices for spouses of junior enlisted soldiers.
- Bulletin boards were set up in the halls of the Family Assistance Center. Each battalion was responsible to post newsletters, messages from the field, photos, announcements of upcoming events and key info. The family members who remained at the post were required to pick up their LES each month at this location, so this greatly helped in passing information. Current newsletters and DA PAMs, post bulletins, messages from the field and notes from the latest teleconference were always available.
- The Brigade, not having deployed, set up a family support phone bank which operated most of the week (and several nights). This consisted of volunteers who called each Desert Storm wife every other week to see if she was doing okay and

if she needed help of any kind. This system was used as a safety net to catch any problem unknown to the unit. We found on more than one occasion that wives would sometimes tell their problems to these volunteers, where they had been reluctant to do so with the unit support groups. The volunteers would do what they could to steer the wife to the right source, and would turn over a list of concerns raised to the chain of command at the end of each week. We also found that if we had the volunteers make the calls to the same group of wives, they tended to get to know them over the telephone and this helped to open the lines of communication.

- The Cdr's secretary kept me posted on any news from the unit.
- Families within the companies grew close during peace time. When the shooting started the closeness greatly lessened the fear factor (I think). The Bn CDR communicated directly with the spouses concerning training schedules. He would also listen to group complaints. The FSG closed ranks (during deployment to Panama for Just Cause) for those few days and measurably lessened the difficulty of waiting for reports from Panama.
- As rumors "passed around" regarding our deployment and as TV and radio stations announced that our unit had been activated, when indeed it had not, the calling tree was the best program in place to temper this uncertain period. Holding regularly scheduled meetings and activities also reduced anxiety.
- Conference calling in Utah, linking geographically spread out areas.
- Phone trees. Company calls once a quarter (SLC)
- Circulating a "Newsletter" was helpful and appreciated, although some people were hard to reach.
- Monthly newsletters and socials. Input from the XO's of each company in the Sinai was mailed back monthly to be included in the newsletter. It gave hints of what the soldiers were doing. Any soldier could send poetry and short messages to be published. Some of them were very moving.
- The civilian community showed their support for the soldiers in the desert. The local newspaper donated a column that we could use to advertise our family support group meetings and fundraisers while the division was gone.
- Keeping the wives informed as much as possible using established telephone trees freed the RDC to handle the serious problems such as evictions, finances, lack of food, etc.
- (OCONUS) When deployed to Saudi we included a personal section in our newsletter. This gave the Marines and their families the opportunity to exchange short messages. This received a

big response from the squadron and by the end became quite lengthy. Copies of the newsletter were sent to the squadron when deployed. A form was attached so single or married Marines could request a newsletter be sent to parents or inadvertently missed spouses who were living out of the area. This was greatly appreciated by parents of Marines and made them feel a part of the squadron. It also gave them a point of contact which was reassuring for them.

- (OCONUS) We told each of the wives who left the area that we would keep them on the telephone chain for appropriate information IF we could call them collect. That way it cost the Contact Reps nothing and the out of town wives were kept informed. In addition, I assumed the responsibility for calling parents of single soldiers (under the same conditions) until the number of calls became too much of a burden. I then shared those calls with another battalion wife.
- (OCONUS) We videotaped everything we did as a FSG and sent a copy to each company in Saudi so that our soldiers could watch the tapes when they had their "day off". We planned many activities around the production of these tapes: picnics where we taped hello's from all six companies, a Christmas carol video taken at the Post Chapel, Thanksgiving dinner in the Brigade Mess Hall, etc. In addition, our Chaplain used a video camera to record many of our soldiers in Saudi, and we viewed these videos during get-togethers.
- (OCONUS) Squadron members contributed money--wives purchased and sent a TV and VCR over. Videos were made at all functions and sent to the guys. Additional tapes were sent of movies, comedy specials, and Presidential visits to base. SATCOM messages were sent on a fairly regular basis between Saudi and Cherry Pt. The messages were delivered by phone to the spouse via a key wife and then attached to their newsletter or handed out at an all-wives meeting. This afforded a more timely means of communication for a non-emergency than the postal system.
- (OCONUS) We had the entire base's support when the actual days came for deployment. We took the families to the flight line and watched the planes take off. We then stayed together for a bit and then went on. I guess in hindsight that this was each and everyone's way of showing that they would be OK and they would get on with things. The exchange of FAX messages was a major success. We were able to send them a half page once a week to the Desert. This enabled families to take care of problems in a timely manner. The Wing Commander had a taped phone message that we could call between 6pm and 6am. He talked with the men in the desert and made a brief phone message. This was so welcomed and helped the families to know a bit of what was happening. During community meetings he updated us and had various base agencies available for questions or help. Meetings were held on weekends so more could attend. Babysitting and light refreshments were provided.

- (OCONUS) One of the unit's major successes, its closeness, was further strengthened. We talked more to each other and found we were not alone, i.e., it was OK to feel upset or hurt.
- (OCONUS) The families had developed more of a closeness--they kept each other informed of their whereabouts. This helped if news or a message came in and needed to be passed on. Our Squadron roster had the addresses of those who had gone to the states or elsewhere and we all kept in touch.
- (OCONUS) Battalion Handbook: small, easy to read; had welcome info, FSG Reps, Community numbers--great for new wives.
- (OCONUS) Battalion Monthly Newsletter: typed by S-1, printed by government; had input from CDR, CDR's spouse, each Co Cdr, Chaplain, soldier's birthdays, awards, promotions, new births, community happenings, community activities (tours), FSG reps, helpful hints; HAND DELIVERED.
- (OCONUS) Monthly FSG Meetings: open to all with fun as well as educational activities and food provided.
- (OCONUS) Visiting: visited every new spouse and gave handbook and newsletter.
- (OCONUS) Roster: kept a personal roster of all wives. Updated monthly and sent to FSG reps, it listed number of children, if pregnant, and known illnesses.
- (OCONUS) Sharing official info helped reassure people.
- (OCONUS) Had NEO wardens personally deliver newsletters while checking routes to houses.

OUTSIDE UNIT SUPPORT

- The entire base supported us. Everyone left behind offered support and it never wavered. The civilian community's support was unbelievable. From a luncheon for spouses whose husbands had deployed given by the Chamber of Commerce, to free concert tickets, to merchants offering free merchandise for the troops, to landlords helping their tenants--it was stupendous.
- The entire base worked together to support the spouses of those deployed. A variety of coupons were given monthly to the families of those deployed. Services included day care hours, nursery hours, flowers, pizzas, monies, video tapes, video taping for messages to loved ones, MWR activities. These coupons were strictly for base use. The civilian community also contributed in the same way. The coupons were incentives to get the families out of the house, giving them something to do. Meetings were held weekly for the Support Group spouses. Some were dinners, always desserts, children

always welcome. This did get out of hand and reservations were taken for free childcare. Older children were gathered in a separate room for games during the meeting. Each individual squadron also had its own support group among squadron wives. The civilian community also honored those Desert Storm families with special coupons. A food bank was also established, (but I don't know how much it was used.) There were also numerous support groups in town and many professionals offered their services at no charge.

- The neighboring towns of Hopkinsville, KY, and Clarksville, TN, were very supportive. They showed visual support with flags, banners, yellow ribbons, etc.; they also gave discounts to military families. Most trailer parks and apartment complexes were very understanding and worked to see that every possible assistance was given if the family had problems.
- The installation centralized the dissemination of LESSs. They used that opportunity to additionally hand out other information and check to make sure all spouses were accounted for.
- The Community Health Nurse at the hospital instituted a program called Labor of Love which matched expectant mothers who had no one locally to assist with childbirth with women who were willing to be their coaches! Great program!
- Since we had no rear detachment, we were entirely reliant on our Family Assistance Center (great!) and our Family Support Group Coordination Office (ostensibly the RD for the entire installation.) Our Installation Commander was always available and open to family concerns. He established weekly commanders' wives briefings (with sandwiches and tea!) which were our lifelines to information and support--they were wonderful! He quickly eliminated (as much as possible) many of the previous roadblocks we had encountered with the use of facilities, printing and mailing of Newsletters, use of telephones, access to his staff, etc. Although I had lived at Ft. Stewart for 4 years, I learned more about the installation and its people in seven months than I had in the previous four years!!
- One of the highlights of the Ft. Stewart deployment experience was the way in which the O-5 and above commanders' wives (we had no female Bn Cdrs) worked together. Because we had no RD we each became solely responsible for our own organizations; by luck and determination, we pulled together to create a pleasant environment. Our Division Commander's wife called it "The Sisterhood", and she was right on target!!
- We were lucky to be in a small Southern town. Although most business people were financially hurt by the deployment (1/3 of the town deployed!!), they banded together (with a wonderful Mayor as their primary cheerleader) to provide support. Many of the business people were retired military, so there was a double connection! Churches and mental health centers

set up support groups, food pantries, baby-sitting services, etc. Retail stores donated goods for picnics and parties, space for meetings, and specials for military ID card holders! Many of the retirees pitched in to take the place of missing coaches, ministers, etc. It was wonderful!!

- One of my fondest memories was the Christmas stocking undertaking! Many of the local businesses, lots of local civilians, and most of the Post community turned out in the Post gym on a Saturday morning to stuff donated Christmas stockings with donated goods to ship to EVERY single soldier in the 24th ID. The coordinators had for three 8-hour days to complete the work. Because so many people showed up the first day, the work was completed in six hours!!
- One spouse's church offered a potluck and our FSG was invited as guests to attend. This same church sponsored two different Saturday afternoons of free babysitting for "Saudi" wives to get out without children--we were included because one spouse was a member of this church. JC Penney's conference room used once for our FSG meeting--after that used chapel on post.
- The military community was there to help if needed.
- The civilian community showed their support for the soldiers in the desert. The local newspaper donated a column that we used to advertise our family support group meetings and fund raisers while the division was gone.
- Lots of donations of goods and services. For units who knew their needy families, it was easy to pass on the food and services to them.
- The Fort Knox military community was fantastic. The Installation Commander directed that family support was the number one priority and things really happened! DPCA was terrific. Their outreach programs came into high visibility with high demand and response. DEH worked very hard to bring the families on post regardless of where they were on the waiting lists for housing. ACS also responded in an outstanding manner to the needs of the families. The Chaplains provided "free" babysitting all day each Friday to Desert Shield/Storm spouses.
- At Fort Bragg, there is quite a sophisticated mechanism set up for the 82d Airborne Division. The rest of us were not quite as prepared, but we definitely benefitted from the fallout and on-hand experience/guidance of others.
- The civilian community was wonderful. Many wanted to donate money, food, and free passes, but could not find anyone to determine what we could accept legally. Food locker drives on post collected from people who were giving in many other ways!

- Several local churches provided free childcare during FSG meeting. Food stores provided food for the food locker. Two companies donated socks for the entire Battalion. Each company had "hometown" stores that donated money, food, etc.
- When requested, there was good support from both the military and civilian communities.
- The Ft. Benning military community provided all the support we wanted or needed. The civilian community was wonderful during Desert Shield/Storm.
- The Ft. Riley military community went all out to support the family members of deployed units. The Family Assistance Center was staffed with the most caring and dedicated personnel and volunteers. The 800 line installed at the center was immensely valuable, saving FSG members both time and money.
- The communities of Junction City and Manhattan, KS, were supportive during all phases of Desert Shield/Storm. Churches, civic organizations, and other organizations developed specifically to meet Desert Shield/Storm spouses' needs, were of great help and moral support.
- There was total community involvement--civilian and military.
- Most of the problems were solved by the FAC and FSG working together. Of course we both relied heavily on the resources available via the hospital, the Red Cross, ACS, Finance, the Chapel, AER, Community Health Nurse, the Post Office, Community Health, JAG, the schools, the civilian community and battalions helping each other. Once the air war began, the installation began weekly briefings. These should have been started earlier on a Corps level, because they were a great source of information and helped to control the rumor mill. During the early stages of deployment, the two-division post did not have a central information system open to everyone. One division had weekly briefings complete with teleconference messages.
- The PX had a very useful "AT&T FAX BOX" in the main PX. The PX also instituted a free fluid check for autos at their station --very friendly and nice. The Auto Hobby Shop was always willing to help give auto advice. The chaplain's assistant printed up prayer cards for me several times.
- The support of the civilian community was overall very good despite the fact that nearly 80% of the military force in the area deployed sending the community into a severe economic slump.
- Many auto repair services had free diagnostic services and or towing.

- During Christmas, many businesses donated items both for the deployed soldiers and the families left behind. Truckloads of food, toys and clothing were received. The local newspaper ran a free column for Bns to advertise upcoming events--a great asset. Sometimes, these ads would also appear on local TV.
- During deployment, hundreds of American flags and yellow ribbons were donated.
- Our Bn was supported by a local church which: sent representatives to invite members to their church and also relate experiences from Vietnam, (Discussed good vs. bad letters sent to soldiers. Gave invaluable advice on what to expect during and after deployment.); assisted during battalion parties by sending some teens to help serve food and watch babies; did some outreach work to "shut-ins" (ladies who did not drive and seemed to be showing signs of stress); videotaped battalion parties to be sent to Saudi. Local VFW offered assistance as well: welcomed members to their facilities, offered support; supplied Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus for Christmas party; supplied Easter Bunny for egg hunt.
- Local businessman adopted needy family and helped with transportation and finances.
- The local Crisis Center was available 24 hours a day and was a great resource as well as being an additional support for wives. A representative came and gave a presentation to the battalion wives.
- The YMCA provided many special programs and had a very well advertised transportation service.
- After Re-deployment, many veteran discounts available; some provided excellent savings (i.e., Sea World).
- In retrospect, the unit benefitted greatly from its ties with the civilian community, and I would highly recommend many such liaisons be formed during peacetime as well. The sharing during "good times" leads to greater understanding across the board.
- Most ACS and other post organizations were willing to help us at any time and were often summoned by small groups to come talk to them about a variety of topics.
- Some civilians volunteered to help out with the Family Action Care Team (FACT). Local merchants offered discounts to Desert Storm families. Several local churches also offered a variety of help programs.
- The military community stood ready to assist. Commanders' wives and CSMs' wives were kept abreast of available resources from the military community ranging from social services,

medical care, transportation, ACS and AER assistance to language and driver's training classes. Fort Campbell also maintained a 24 hour family assistance hotline. The help was definitely there for anyone who chose to use it.

- The civilian community was extremely supportive. They set up community family support groups, child care programs, local organizations sponsored Christmas parties and Easter egg hunts for the military children, and finally, many of the churches had activities for the military families.
- Major success: Attendance at meetings. Civilian community was extremely supportive. My biggest challenge was to organize and systematize all the dollars, services, goods, etc.. They volunteered babysitting (all childcare centers took our children free for specified periods of time), people volunteered to help with small home repairs, free heating/air conditioning including parts, free dental service (Preventive only), free tax assistance, rooms for meetings donated, all coffee, juices, treats, etc. free, childcare with meetings provided free, counseling services (up to 8 visits free), tickets for every type of event imaginable provided, Easter baskets, videos of families made and sent to soldiers by K-Mart--a support sing-a-long video made for Christmas. Two of our TV stations sent complete crews for one week to be with our soldiers and aired the videos including a one hour special each night for the next two weeks. TV and newspaper coverage couldn't have been more positive. Prayer groups and vigils set up by local groups as well as our support groups along with several marches in support of our soldiers including one in Feb. (Temp 15 degrees). People showed up for a Homecoming celebration held as the soldiers came home the first day. Arrival dates/times were known less than 72 and 24 hours in advance, respectively.
- Since the reserve families were "in" the community we saw a great deal of community involvement. Fundraisers and donations for homecomings were well supported by local civilians.
- The local community offered us places to hold meetings. The local VFW allowed us to use their meeting hall. Speakers from various community services and the local Davis Monthan Air Force Base presented their programs at our pre-mobilization meeting. The Family Support center at the local base sent their director to this meeting and the local Air National Guard gave us a list of names and telephone numbers in case someone needed assistance once our unit was deployed. Regardless of Service affiliation, everyone should pool their resources to help those units that want assistance, fresh ideas, and most importantly, to assist in information dissemination even across military organizational boundaries.
- One military facility housed all resources. Civilians interacted principally during Desert Storm--church groups, businesses, prominent civilian wives, and retired military.

- The Deputy Community Commander formed a small staff from brigade and battalion rear detachments. Their support was excellent. Erlangen is self-contained for the most part to include: ACS, commissary, PX, dental and medical clinics. Bus transportation from outlying housing areas to Erlangen and to Nuremburg. ACS was always available and eager to help. A German-American Wives club was active.
- Information sharing was very successful. The Command Structure was not overtaxed by the deployment; everyone got on the band wagon for exiting and returning troops. Support from the military (active and retired) and civilian communities was very solid!! Everyone wanted to help!
- Civilian Community--Contact with churches for marriage counseling, VA hospital, CHAMPUS Reps in area, National Guard in Montana, local police safety briefing, Red Cross and United Way.
- We had an excellent Family Assistance Center functioning before the unit deployed. It was a one-stop, fix-it place and generally got the problems solved.
- The communities of Junction City and Manhattan went all out for us--sponsoring family parties and offering lots of free or cut rate items and services. The retired community of Junction City organized a support system for each unit and socially supported the Support Group Leaders (in most cases Bn and Bde Cdr wives). We became well acquainted and made some strong bonds painfully broken at departure.
- During Desert Storm, in conjunction with a local radio station, we had music dedications and messages. Family and spouses had one week and Marines had a week shortly after.
- During Operation Just Cause there was little to no involvement with the civilian community. We were in a war and restricted to the U.S. military installations.
- Food, Army Band, Chaplains and the command representatives were at every homecoming celebration (32 in all). Communicated with Reserve Commands so that hotel reservations could be made for returning troops.
- The Division Commander ensured that all units had FSGs and that they met standards. A division FSG Office was established to answer any questions including those from Rds. All agencies supported.
- Lots of donations of goods and services. For units who knew their needy families, it was easy to distribute needed food and services.
- (OCONUS) Germans were generous and helpful.

- (OCONUS) Military Community: Good ACS Outreach Coordinator for 6 months (would inform me about incoming enlisted wives before the unit even knew about them), then no Outreach Coordinator after Just Cause. Installation Volunteer Coordinator did her best to keep programs going and information flowing at a monthly meeting held same day as OWC board meeting. Many attended both meetings.
- (OCONUS) Military and civilian support was outstanding.
- (OCONUS) Post Chaplain held appropriate briefings prior to soldiers' return.
- (OCONUS) Division band performed for each returning group.
- (OCONUS) Military Community offered tours, cooking lessons, and free public transportation tickets. Interaction with the civilian community in Germany hampered by the language barrier.
- (OCONUS) Military Community--100% support! MILCOM bent over backwards for each battalion!
- (OCONUS) German-American Club and sister battalion were very active and supportive of the soldiers and families.
- (OCONUS) NEO wardens visited every family! Delivered battalion newsletter monthly.
- (OCONUS) My entire contact was with the civilian community since our family was not near any U.S. military installation.
- (OCONUS) Since he (Single Cdr) was also the community commander, he was able to turn the recreation center into a library complete with a paid (30 hr/wk) librarian.
- (OCONUS) Military Community: FACs established, staffed, and physically improved.
- (OCONUS) German civilians volunteered time, info, and material support.
- (OCONUS) MILCOM provided copying services, a family support center, monthly information meetings, "sensing sessions", newsletter, MARS, FAX to FOXHOLE. Had yellow ribbon ceremony for morale support of waiting families.
- (OCONUS) Military Community Support certainly met requests. Our base had a Family Support Center. It existed full time--during sustainment and at all other times. This provided our primary support after a need was expressed by someone or a group within the unit. Chapel support included a full-time Chaplain, and our supporting Flight Medicine Clinic assigned a Flight Surgeon to the unit.

- (OCONUS) Civilian Community. The base's Anglo-American Committee enabled us to meet, get to know, and become involved with our British hosts. This committee, during Desert Shield/Storm, sent packages to the unit--playing cards, athletic supplies, etc. Family support groups of deployed Royal Air Force units invited us to attend their meetings. A few American families lived in an off-base RAF housing area which provided a British information and referral volunteer agency. They invited Americans to participate in their activities and posted American information there as well.
- (OCONUS) The base Family Support Center provided many programs and courses for the families. They welcomed suggestions and made themselves and the Center available to the families. The base Public Affairs Office newsletter, DESERT DISPATCH, contained information from the desert as well as activities and support available through the base. AAFES facilities provided discount coupons for families. Free bowling and reduced babysitting were also available.
- (OCONUS) The schools had discussion groups for the children--both elementary and high school.

REAR DETACHMENT

- The Division Rear Commander was a colonel. He and other staff left behind arranged briefings for all levels of FSG volunteers. We had briefings for Commanders Wives, contact people briefings, training classes, and weekly information was distributed through the post newspaper, etc. Much support!
- During Hurricane Hugo and NTC deployments, senior NCOs served as Bn level RD commanders. Neither NCO was married or fully appreciated family issues. They had no training or enthusiasm for RDC responsibilities. We sort of muddled along and prayed for the best. Our FSG organization utilized them as intermediaries with the rest of the Division (green-suiters), for communication with the Bn in Charleston and Ft. Irwin and for help in scheduling meetings and the Bn classroom. They handled a variety of clerical and financial problems for wives who ran into Army-related problems while their husbands were deployed.
- Division HQ directed that there be no Rear Detachment during the Saudi deployment except at Brigade level. FSG operated out of Bn area and did a great job. The FAC worked well. They took care of all the green suit problems. One officer, who got sick in Saudi and returned, became the "unofficial Rear Detachment."
- A RD Cdr and several soldiers were always left behind during field exercises. This worked very well.

- Each company left a person in the rear as their company's primary POC. All wives knew their company POC and notified them of their problems.
- Competent rear detachment.
- Company commanders were charged to form strong groups.
- Two sergeants assigned to the RD Office proved invaluable. Their only duty was Family Support, but they went above and beyond by mowing grass and doing minor car repairs. They solved many small problems that during deployment seem monumental.
- The Bn RD (one NCO and several Ems, all non-deployable) were left for property book purposes only, and rarely (only if caught and cornered) interacted with Family Support issues. Being a divisional Bn, we had no Bde at the post. Therefore, we were assigned to 2d Bde, 1st Cav, for Family Support purposes. This also became my RD. The division had set up its own FAC and divided it up into separate detachments, A through F, each detachment having 4-5 Bns under its guidance. The captain in charge of the detachment assumed responsibility for each Bn and was in charge of all family problems, all soldiers left behind, all property, all correspondence with troops in the field, and anything else that might affect the units on the home front. It was an awesome responsibility. Luckily the captain in charge of Detachment C where we were assigned was excellent. His total caring professional attitude and knowledge of the system minimized problems for our Family Support Group. Some detachments were not as lucky. The NCOs that worked for the captain were also very supportive. Our goals were the same--to get families through this ordeal as well as possible. The detachment called frequently, thus keeping me up to date. They set up Cdrs wives' mail boxes to facilitate timely communications between key leaders.
- A lieutenant colonel and a major supervised the entire FAC. I only needed the "big guns" twice during the deployment.
- Because this was a separate Bn, there was always a RD left behind. It worked very well--no problems.
- Rear Detachment - Almost always left one. FSGs grew close. One half of the Bn was in Panama for the start of Just Cause and the other half immediately deployed.
- During a deployment to fight forest fires, the Cdr set up a family center in HQ for family members. He left an excellent RD which kept me informed, helped spouses and kids with transportation problems, etc. when needed. Info was relayed to Bn from Idaho daily and posted on chalk boards, videos were sent back, and clippings were displayed. Wives knew they could depend on these soldiers, and as a result, there were very few problems. Wives knew they had someone they could

call if there was a problem. Knowing there was support, most wives kept busy and tried to maintain some independence.

- During training deployments, a staff officer and several others served as rear detachment. Problems were easily solved because communication was fairly simple and the rest of the division was intact for support.
- For MFO we had a Cpt with prior command experience as RDC. He also had an acting 1SG. He was responsible for Bn activities and was available to FSG at all times. Worked great! Because of his command experience he knew how agencies worked on post.
- For two years at Fort Ord, the unit appointed a permanent RD Cdr. He was an E-6 with 17 years experience. A medical profile kept him from field duty. He was great and the young spouses trusted him. He knew how the system worked and kept me informed on every deployment. During Just Cause we spoke almost every day.
- (OCONUS) The RD was one officer in the Bn Hq and an SDNCO in each company. The RD was effective and reduced the workload on Cdr's wives.
- (OCONUS) Rear Detachment left for regularly scheduled training deployments worked fairly well. When FSG needs were not being met, confronted RDC and his rater, and support improved.
- (OCONUS) When the unit deployed to Saudi, a seasoned sergeant major, who had spent several years with the Bn, was left as the RD. He was ably assisted by an NCOIC, a personnel/administrative specialist, and a team of eight to ten full-time men. The RD functioned extremely well. They worked together with our FSG, assisting in all areas and assuming the burden for any major problems that developed, for example, a rape occurred in our Bn during the deployment. The RD was proactive: correlated and distributed family support newsletters, attended battery-level family support functions and Bn-level steering committee meetings, assisted in planning Bn-wide activities, checked regularly on family members, and handled major problems as described above. We were extremely successful in this endeavor. No major problems developed with the RD.
- (OCONUS) Rear unit and NEO wardens worked well.
- (OCONUS) Command structure was left behind and worked fine.
- (OCONUS) There was someone left behind to run the operations of the squadron except during Operation Desert Shield/Storm. In normal circumstances the RD worked extremely well. All the family members knew whom to contact for assistance and generally which person or agency to contact for what type of assistance. The communications between the blue suiters behind, those gone and those family members at the unit normal

location were excellent. Operation Desert Shield/Storm was a new experience. The Wing Commander, The Deputy Commander for Operations and my husband discussed in detail who would assume the responsibilities of the unit family members in the area of blue suit support and assistance. Another flying unit located at our base assumed these responsibilities and did an excellent job at it. The Deputy Commander for Operations ensured that families were assisted where and when necessary and encouraged families to be as self-sufficient as possible. The Wing Commander directed the base agencies to direct all needed assistance.

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP STRUCTURE

- With ACS help, set up an information and referral center in Bn Hqs. Paid staff person helped to get addresses of new spouses and kept roster up to date. She was a contact person for community and unit information for soldiers and family members. She was an active member of FSG leadership team. During change of command period, she provided continuity to FS program.
- One of our biggest successes was recruiting some of the younger enlisted wives to become the FSG leaders in a company that had no interested officer or NCO wife.
- The company wives had the security of a council to aid them with problems. The troop CO's wife did not have to deal with everything on her own.
- Each company met monthly and formed a close-knit group that suited their own needs. Some met in homes, others in the day-room. HQ Co started a business selling 326-Desert Shield T-shirts and sweatshirts. Instead of adding stress, the project brought unity to the group and an outlet for their need to be together. They made about \$600 which they used for a wonderful catered homecoming for the soldiers. I encouraged each company to become an individual unit--yet I met weekly on Tuesdays--with the Co leaders and our RD Cdr over a sack lunch in the Bn. We set aside a room with a child's play area in one corner, a fridge, coffee pot, TV and phone. We carpeted it and used it frequently for meetings. We all looked forward to our lunch together. We shared information, asked the rear detachment commander questions, used the computer and copier machine, and telephoned the out-of-town wives. This consistently worked well.
- Our FSG meetings weren't cut and dry meetings. We briefly heard from the RD (he was at EVERY meeting!) then I spoke/passed out information--but then we did things together: bowling, potlucks, picnics, packages for the whole office in Saudi (to especially remember the single soldiers). Informal meetings, NO RANK between the wives, included the children when possible.

- FSG was all ranks--Major and I ran brief meetings--then more importantly our wives spent time together: helping each other, making friends, supporting each other. Phone tree was used at least once a week by wives to just check on each other and to pass on messages. Office was staffed by some member of RD 24 hours a day for mail, emergencies, messages to and from Saudi. FSG handouts and meeting notes were on file in RD office; wives came in to read/receive this information.
- We continued our family support the same as always, it was just used more during deployment.
- The Division Cdr ensured all units had FSG and insured that they met standards. A division FSG office was established to answer any questions including those from RDs. All agencies supported.
- One 1SG's wife was dynamic and put all her energy into the Troop. She could really communicate with wives of all levels. She motivated them and they knew she honestly cared about them. It was a joy to watch this lady work with the 18 year old wives and E-7 wives and instill the joy of being a military spouse and pride in their husbands.
- We have an active Waiting Wives group all the time.
- The FSG was kept together by hard working spouses. Fantastic support during crises, i.e., death.
- Scheduled FSG meetings helped ensure a link between families and RD. So families had a "face" to bring their problems to. Special, unscheduled briefs.
- Most NCO wives stayed and were of great help to the Bn and military community. I believe that the wives who stayed and pitched in benefitted from each other. They seemed to manage their lives, children, problems, and be able to help others, better than those spouses who retreated and closed themselves off.
- We survived! The several caring NCOs with a CAN DO attitude were lifesavers as were the 3 different chaplains used during the 5 month deployment. And last but not least, the core of friendly, caring wives who seemingly could perform miracles. I also appreciated that my husband did his best to keep me informed ; I felt like FS was a priority with him.
- BN Cdr focused on each company running its own FSG program. Family support was necessary since representative slices of the Bn were frequently deployed. NCO wives had the capability to lead.
- Monthly meetings of the Executive Committee with the Regional Coordinator helping to plan agendas worked well. Our Executive Committee's newsletter, the Desert Messenger, disseminat-

ed information from the ARCOM down to the unit via the Coordinators.

- Awards and recognition of spouses at Yearly Training Conference (SLC).
- Active FSG allowed soldiers to concentrate on their jobs. FSG was an information source for spouses.
- Company wide meetings held at least monthly or more were great. They overflowed into social groups which was a real need of the spouses.
- For MFO: 8-member council including company reps, a treasurer, editor, child care coordinator, and hospitality. Bn Cdr wife was the advisor.
- Bn Cdr and CSM wives were co-advisors (she came after the first year and made a big difference--the first CSM was single). Each company had two reps: treasurer and baby layette coordinator. Distributed newsletter with roster attached. I chaired the monthly information meetings, but the chaplain, S-3 and S-1 did most of the talking when they were not deployed. The chaplain reserved the room, set up chairs, and provided refreshments out of FSG funds. RD did so when the soldiers deployed. Held socials when husbands were deployed for more than two weeks. Approximately 60 baby blankets, with unit crest embroidered in corner, were delivered to the hospital for new babies in the unit before the Mother left.
- (OCONUS) FSG leaders worked well as a team.
- (OCONUS) The FSGs were cohesive, functioning organizations run by company commander and volunteers.
- (OCONUS) A cohesive, organized, friendly unit and environment, was a unit success which mirrored the prior unit Cdr's encouragement, caring and support.

BRIEFING/TRAINING

CONUS & OCONUS:

- Cannot over emphasize preparation during normal sustainment and pre-deployment periods. The preparation of wills, powers of attorney, and associated documents are critical. The family care plans for single parents must be completed, checked and approved before deployment.
- Began to hold monthly meetings which many, many more wives attended. Gave instructions for financial preparation, e.g. how to renew insurance. Husbands and wives attended together and wives were required to sign off on items such as will

preparation. The FSG leaders came to these meetings and everyone got to meet them. Cdr personally sent a letter to every wife and every parent just prior to deployment.

- The Ft. Stewart Installation Cdr instituted weekly briefings for ANY person who wanted to attend. They were always in the same place (post theater), at the same times (0900, 1300, 1900), on the same day (Thursday). This became the central source of information for many spouses, even those who had viable FSGs!!
- The Installation sponsored "Casualty Briefing" during the early part of January 1991. Although there was initially some resistance to the explicit discussion, it was decided fear of the unknown would be eliminated if there was some candid discussion of what would happen if we suffered casualties. It worked--families were grateful for the information!!
- We set up briefings for each company; all spouses were invited to hear the Co Cdr and 1SG brief the wives on the speaker phone from Saudi. This was a success.
- Meeting by the Cdr to explain what was happening (to the entire battalion).
- Went extremely well. Most, if not all, service members and family members cooperated with military requirements and FSG requests.
- The "Reunion" training the chaplain offered after Ahaus Tara and Bright Star was very helpful. We had very few domestic problems afterward. Preparing the spouses for returns does make things go smoother.
- We had tapes available here and for the SM in Saudi. Chaplains spoke (both places) about problems and expectations.
- The SJA, the Installation Volunteer Coordinator, the ACS Social worker, and chaplains talked at our meetings--very helpful.
- Major success: The S-1 produced a beautiful, bilingual flyer in both English and Spanish, inviting all wives to the pre-deployment briefing. The commander went to two locations and presented pre-deployment briefings in English and Spanish followed by a question and answer period. Company that had highest attendance received half day off, but problems still surfaced. We had an excellent pre-deployment handbook.
- Timely briefings.
- Briefings and Developmental Guide handed to families.
- During the PRE-DEPLOYMENT phase, each military wife was given a packet of information to be filled out with her spouse. The

packet would supply the military wife with pertinent information such as where important documents were kept, information on financial matters, and bills to be paid, to mention a few. Many wives found this to be beneficial and they felt adequately prepared when their spouse deployed. Also during the pre-deployment phase, our steering committee received worthwhile Bn level training.

- During DEPLOYMENT, a Bn-wide information meeting was scheduled with resource people from every facet of the military community.
- During the HOMECOMING phase, we scheduled a presentation called "Life after Desert Storm". A community social services counselor conducted a discussion on reunion after prolonged separation.
- Wives accompanied their husbands to Quarterly Training Briefings and received separate training during the briefings.
- Attendance by Co reps to San Francisco for volunteer training (SLC).
- Normal pre-deployments went very smoothly. For Operation Desert Storm/Shield things were done differently. The wives were briefed on where their husbands were going, what they would be doing, how they would be living, and asked for any questions. (We had a unit from the base who had been sending pilots on 30 day rotations to the Gulf Area. These men provided slides of Saudi Arabia and information to the families). Other briefings were presented by the Base Personnel Affairs, Family Support Center, Social Sections, Casualty Officer, and Medical staff. The Medical Staff member talked about stress--its signs and what to do. This was great and warmly received and gave us ideas to help us out and also made to realize that we were not expected to be superwomen. These briefings were given in community areas so that families living in outlying areas could attend. A packet was given out which covered things to have ready, things to discuss, and things we might encounter during pre-deployment, deployment, and homecoming. The Wing Commander opened these briefings and demonstrated his concern from the onset. All base agencies were available at these briefings to answer any questions. Some questions precipitated actions to ameliorate anticipated problems.
- Our family member briefing was excellent and highly acclaimed. Many areas were briefed and experts were available to answer questions. Our "Chain of Concerns" were worked up and handed out at pre-deployment.
- Two day training seminar provided by a Division FSG Office. Covered leadership skills, agency support, lessons learned, phone trees, etc. Most training done by volunteers from

established FSGs. Well attended by spouses, COs, and 1SGs. All Co level reps attended training on their own cognition.

- Social rosters generated by the unit.
- FSGs worked best when commanders were the driving force behind the group.
- Works best when it is an ongoing established group.
- Conference calling with the commander at a specific time each month to check on rumors and policies.
- Works when training is provided.
- A group provided Bingo to get wives to attend.
- Bilingual newsletters and interpreter were available.
- Meetings held in evenings and childcare provided.
- Support from community and senior officers.
- One division commander in Germany allowed spouses to catch MAC flights home.
- Cellular phones given to FSG leaders to cut phone costs.
- Paid employees were hired to handle all invitations and logged responses.
- A five-man team was hired at Ft. Ord (for reservists from three states) to answer toll-free calls 24 hours a day; they had a direct line to support agencies.
- Mandatory FSG training for company commanders, 1SGs and rear detachment.
- Division-level FSG office to research and answer questions for the FSG leaders, commanders, and RDs and to assist dysfunctional families.
- Put an officer in charge of receiving all civilian business donations (possibly DPCA) and made him responsible for publicizing what was available. Limited donations to money only, which automatically went into AER for emergency use.
- Regulations eased during crisis for agencies such as ACS and AER so that services are more easily available to families of deployed soldiers without all the red tape.

CHAPTER 5

WHAT DIDN'T WORK!

As we all know, things do fail us at times. Even in the best of systems, problems do occur. The following are specific examples and experiences of many people involved with Family Support Groups. The groups were unique depending on branch of service, size, mission and amount of support provided from the military and civilian community in their area. Their specific problems were also unique. However, there appeared to be some definite problem areas.

It is the purpose of this section to highlight these problem areas with actual experiences. Hopefully, those who will be involved in supporting families in the future will be more informed and possibly more prepared for the demands of Family Support.

We have separated the problem areas into ten different categories. Each are listed below with the appropriate quotes, drawn from survey responses. You will see that some quotes are relevant to more than one category.

Dependency

- Dysfunctional Families surfaced very quickly. They need to be taken off the shoulders of FSG's and referred immediately to other agencies (social workers, family advocacy).
- Not all wives are US Citizens--hence immigration problems.
- I do not agree with having wives stay all night together during crisis. It created many dependencies.
- (OCONUS) Some families, husbands and wives, think the army is there at their beck and call; they want someone to solve their problems every time they cry or whine. That is a hazard that has developed as a result of the concept of Family Support.
- (OCONUS) Expectations people had of what leaders could do were too high.
- (OCONUS) At different times, 20-40% of wives spoke only a foreign language, making them dependent on translators.
- (OCONUS) Wives who did not drive became dependent on others.
- (OCONUS) There was a tendency to overprotect and over support families.
- (OCONUS) Wives did not want their husbands to depart and constantly tried to get in touch with them while they were deployed.

Uninformed

- The anxiety of not knowing anything (when war would begin, how long, etc.).
- FSG leaders did not have correct information on spouses.
- We had wives 'disappear' as soon as their husbands left for Saudi. We didn't know where they were.
- We found that some husbands were telling their wives not to call the unit because they thought it might reflect badly.
- Some young enlisted wives had never been on post because their husbands didn't want them exposed to other soldiers.
- Sometimes we only found out about spouse infidelities, or departures from the area when the soldier returned, then we were accused of not taking care of his family.
- (Army Reserve) Soldiers were administratively unprepared.
- (OCONUS) Some of the young enlisted men inhibited their wives from learning more.
- (OCONUS) There is a major problem in Germany because the soldiers live so spread out in small communities and some can't afford phones.
- (OCONUS) Commanders' spouses were accused of withholding information--which was not true.

Resources

- Our second biggest problem was identifying the dollars to use for a regular newsletter. The new regulations covering printing and mailing should eliminate those problems in the future.
- The housing office was uncooperative and there was a delay in acquiring housing.
- There was a lack of funds for FSG activities & childcare costs. Lack of transportation.
- Keeping family data sheets, family care plans, and chain of concern phone trees current was impossible.
- Tracking people became a full-time job. If a wife moved and left no forwarding address, she would be lost from the system since bulk rate mail is not forwarded. Note: The battalion newsletter is considered a key link and one of the most valuable communications resources yet it is relegated to the high status of 'junk mail'. This issue needs to be re-addressed.

At least during deployments, it should be First Class. Reduce the size for first class.

- Keeping on-post facilities open for use by the families for meetings. Once the units all deployed, DEH began closing buildings, once even turning off the water during a meeting. I had to fight for use of this room the entire deployment.
- On-post child care was available through in-home care givers as well as through the post Child Care Center. However, the list of active in-home care givers was not kept up to date, making it difficult to obtain assistance when needed. It was especially difficult to secure emergency overnight care.
- Lack of coordinated support effort when most of base left-- the resources were fragmented.
- In many instances, when our reserve unit was deployed, the reserve center was locked creating numerous problems for the FSG members.
- Our chaplain support was lacking.
- Keeping a lid on monies donated with strings attached seemed to be the only problem. Many businesses wanted to donate to Homecomings, but they wanted a tax deduction.
- (OCONUS) The German American Club provided limited support, but primarily to officers' wives.
- (OCONUS) Child care plans for single and dual military soldiers fell through.
- (OCONUS) No designated meeting places.
- (OCONUS) Newsletters were a problem after the chaplain's wife left. People didn't want to respond.
- (OCONUS) There was a lack of operating funds, too few chaplains & transportation.

Consistency

- Another problem was lack of consistency in communication and rumor control.
- The homecoming was a mess. The airmen returning were called on stage. The family had to greet their returning airman in front of hundreds of people. The single airmen had no one to greet them.
- People tried to out-do each other with their decorations and ceremonies for homecoming.

- (OCONUS) Each platoon had different missions--some easier, some harder; phone systems were primitive--some heard from spouse, some didn't.
- (OCONUS) Recapturing battalion esprit-de-corps. Battalion divided between who went and who didn't.

Expectations

- There was no rear detachment in the 24 ID, so the disadvantages were overwhelming because the bulk of all work (information, referral, coordination, organization, telephoning, communication, newsletter, telephone tree, etc.) within each Battalion fell upon the shoulder of the "top ranking" person, the commander's wife!!!
- Expectations for participation were too high. Should lower them and try for a strong core group, not just large turnouts.
- Responsibilities bogged down a few individuals.
- (OCONUS) Beware of burnout, stress.
- (OCONUS) Expectations of what leaders could do were too high.
- (OCONUS) Commander's wife took on the major responsibility, but she worked and was out of town, so there was no FSG. I had coffees, etc. for officers wives. There should have been something for the NCO and non-command sponsored wives.

Regulations

CONUS AND OCONUS

- FSG Guide to Deployment DA PAM 608-3 was not available.
- The newsletter was a pain--there were too many regulations and mailing was difficult.
- Regulations were not the same or clear across the Army. Role of FSG's inadequately defined and duties continued to grow.
- Fundraisers had too much red tape.
- Too many regulations on newsletter content.
- Hospitalization: because of the Privacy Act, we could not find out who was admitted to the hospital.
- The Corps mail room seemed to find great pleasure in changing the rules for bulk rate newsletter distribution each month.

- I asked for a copy of newsletter regulation and was told not to ask because it was easier to get forgiveness than permission.

Motivation and Training

- The family support volunteers had virtually no training. It was basically learned "on-the-job".
- If the senior military spouse is 'in charge', she must be trained! Totally unfair to her and all in the system. Our problems were caused by lack of training.
- People were trying to tackle situations they weren't trained for or had no business in.
- There was a lack of information on 'How to's' and funding to reimburse volunteers.
- As with all FSG's, our biggest problem was enticing family members to become involved.
- The one company that did not have accurate telephone rosters caused the spouses to get information late and they became very frustrated. I felt the company commander was responsible for the frustration.
- Company commanders didn't maintain updated calling rosters with accurate numbers & addresses. The Bn commander had to apply pressure to obtain new rosters.
- NCO and enlisted personnel were hesitant to bond and organize.
- Family Support was not high on the list of priorities. No one wanted the extra work on top of their own work.
- Soldiers were not prepared and did not prepare their wives for deployment.
- The importance of FSG should be stressed to incoming soldiers. Especially the issue of what an FSG is not. (Ex. babysitter, taxi service, money lender.)
- Attendance. Those who came benefitted. Nonetheless, it was hard to set up a nice program and then have poor attendance.
- Commanders, especially 'single' commanders in the reserve, were not supportive of FSG.
- One person trying to make things run the way she wanted; not necessarily for the good of the whole battalion.
- (OCONUS) Our main problem was maintaining interest in family support during sustainment.

Rear Detachment

- During Desert Storm/Shield, there was no rear detachment in the 24 ID. There was not one soldier left behind at Bn or Bde level. The bulk of the work fell on the shoulders of the 'top ranking' person, the commander's wife.
- Sometimes there was a lack of concern from the RD. Their priorities were not necessarily the same as mine. Getting fast, accurate info from them was difficult. As they had no real clear definition of their role, they may or may not understand what I was needing from them.
- The Rear Detachment did not actively come out and try and get us to use them. They did not help too much when it came to finding meeting rooms, babysitting, etc. Mostly, they were uncooperative. They did not make our lives any easier.
- Capable/qualified personnel were moved from rear detachment. They passed the buck too easily and quickly.
- There was a poor or nonexistent rear detachment.
- The battalion rear detachment left (one NCO and several Ems, all non-deployable) for property book purposes only, rarely (only if caught or cornered) interacted with Family Support issues.
- There was no rear detachment. We had no POC's or records. Our Battalion & Brigade did what they could--they were out of the line of communication & had no more info than we had. Our Brigade and/or Bn had no fully paid or volunteer coordinator.
- Usually the structure was made up of those awaiting Trial or with family members that needed medical attention. During short exercises, many officers or senior NCO's were rotated from the field back into the command, then back to the field exercise.
- During Operation Desert Storm, we felt completely bereft of unit representation. A CPT (who was left behind for medical reasons and soon got worse), an NCO with the same medical situation and a couple of pregnant clerks were left behind to serve as the 'contact unit'. How well did it work? As everyone was getting sick or having babies you can guess we had some turnover. But the replacements were not members of our Bn. before deployment so were virtually useless.
- (OCONUS) An infantry battalion remained & consequently that battalion commander became the Brigade/Community Cdr. Besides their regular heavy training schedule, this unit was tasked with meeting all the installation requirements plus all the extra security needs. This commander and his unit were supposedly in charge of each of the very small Rds left by the other Bns. This command was so overwhelmed with all their

tasking there was little emphasis to keep the other units' RD people accountable.

- (OCONUS) Our unit did not deploy as a group; only portions at a time from the medical group. 'Rear Detachment' was a captain with a phone located a 2 1/2-hour drive away. Frequently she didn't return phone calls unless the colonel called her. She was 'rear detachment commander' for six different medical units, from different home stations and each deployed to different locations. Usually she had no information.
- (OCONUS) The only time that problems occurred (at least for me personally and for the unit family members and support group) is when the blue suiters attempted to over-protect the family members, or tried to down play the families' concerns.

Communication and Rumor Control

CONUS AND OCONUS

- Biggest problem during the war was reporting on TV. An announcement would be made about a type of aircraft shot down; wives hadn't been told yet and always panicked. Fortunately, we were kept informed as much as possible.
- Communication was difficult between our RD and Saudi. Frequently our soldiers would return stateside for medical reasons and call home before our RD knew they were returning. Because there were so many unknowns, people were quick to believe and share anything.
- FSG leaders didn't have correct information on spouses.
- Keeping in touch with families; making sure families will come forward with problems was a problem.
- Soldiers did not all return as one unit so keeping people notified of arrivals was a problem. We hoped that last minute changes could be kept to a minimum.
- Rumor control was difficult to manage. Communication, misinformation, and rumor control were impossible because of telephones.
- Misinformed volunteers, counter-productive.
- Husbands writing/calling depressing, incorrect, frightening information.
- Telephones in the field caused problems during the action.
- Some heard from spouse, some didn't.

- Rumors were a constant problem.
- Lack of info due to classified 'info' proved to be a problem.
- Wives with no phones were very difficult to contact. Some would have their phones disconnected (without telling us) after their husbands left.
- We found that some of the very young wives of junior enlisted were hesitant to notify anyone if they had problems or questions.
- The notification process of who was coming home and when, was completely broken. Probably the most accurate source was the wives themselves because husbands would often call from Saudi before they departed to let them know when they were to arrive. This led to much confusion because the military would get official word of returns, and the wives would get unofficial word. These often did not match, and made for frustrations on both sides.
- Information people (i.e. Cdr's spouse) accused of withholding information.
- Communication was very limited. I often went weeks with no calls and the letters were so old they weren't much help to our unit. It seemed most of the BN. CO wives were having the same problem. If senior people on post were getting more info, they didn't share it with us. This made gossip another major problem. Rumors often raged through the lower ranks. They would finally call me for a confirmation or denial and I had to claim ignorance most of the time. This was frustrating.
- Communication to the desert was a division-wide failure; even some Red Cross messages were fouled up.
- A slight problem existed when some families decided to go to the United States. There was concern that they would be left out of the loop of information.

GENERAL PROBLEMS - During sustainment, the problems listed below are usually handled by the unit. However, during times of deployment, they may become a significant burden to family support and rear detachment.

Troublemakers
 Changes in financial stability
 Births
 Miscarriages
 Major birth defects
 Deaths
 Threatened suicides
 Abuse
 Adultery

Divorce
Major illness
Car/license problems
Landlord problems
Housing
Thefts/muggings
Impatience
Irresponsibility
Pay problems
Depression

In most cases, "What didn't work" was made "to work" by some very dedicated volunteers. Using tremendous amounts of determination and perseverance, they had to work through and/or around the system to "make things happen". This was not easy and took more time and energy than it should have. Frustration with the system frequently discouraged volunteers.

Family Support should not be difficult! If constant emphasis, by the Division commander or senior military leader, is placed on Family Support as a priority, there will be a big difference in the attitudes of the unit volunteers. They will then get the outside support they need.

Capable Rear Detachments should be a requirement for all units, and agencies on post should shoulder the full responsibility for dysfunctional family members. They alone have the trained personnel to deal with these people.

Military leaders at all levels should be trained in the matters of Family Support and be held responsible for its function both during sustainment and during deployment. This includes requiring that all soldiers and their families be made aware of what Family Support Groups are and are not.

Family Support Group volunteers should not have to struggle for a place to meet, supplies to function with or any other resource they require. They should only be involved in emotional support, flow of information and referral of problems to the appropriate agencies.

CHAPTER 6

WHAT IS UNRESOLVED?

"The Army has dumped on me again." "I feel used and abused."

"The Army needs to understand that, as Family Support Groups currently stand, it is asking for free employment from the non-commander half of the 'command team' at all command levels)."

These expressions exemplify the feelings of many Family Support Group Leaders because of unresolved and unanswered issues resulting in the confusion between Family Support requirements and Family Support Group responsibilities. The three major areas are training/education, inconsistencies, and regulations.

Training/Education

- More training needed--earlier education at all levels and continuously updated--for the soldier and family.
- Training for young soldiers about FSGs early in career.
- Military needs to retrain the COs.
- As a single commander I felt that I missed out on Family Support training at Leavenworth.
- Consistent education to leaders.
- Education to new soldiers and families on what FSGs are not.
- New books and guidelines for Family Support/Family Support Groups.
- Expectations not defined.
- Still not marketing the FSG benefit.
- Still not marketing well, therefore difficult to recruit volunteers and key people.
- Definite need for universal organized system.

Inconsistencies

- Inequality.
- Policies reaching unit level.
- We should all have received the same information/guidance.
- Frustration.

- Frustration that Posts do not uniformly interpret policies at their level.
- Lack of interpretation of Army Regulations.
- Lack of consistency in unit FSG (there is no norm).
- No continuity.

Regulations

- Confusion.
- No continuity.
- Definite need for universal organized system.
- Would like active duty soldier to be designated as a Unit Families Officer.
- A real need exists for a standard place and person for a family support resource representative at all installations.
- Legitimize FSG leader.
- Legitimizing FSGs giving them some clout within the division.
- Use of first class mail for newsletters.
- Make agencies responsive to FSG.
- Disappointed that new regulations don't reach Battalion Commanders.
- New reg on funding for reimbursement to volunteers.
- Red tape/Regs.
- Clarify responsibilities and courses of action for dealing with family member trouble makers (especially wives).

Summary

Many of the frustrations, concerns, and hopes experienced by this sampling of Family Support Group members can be alleviated. The quality of family support for tomorrow's Army should be improved through new consistent training, education, and regulations.

The issues enumerated in this chapter are now being reviewed by the DCSPER and the Department of the Army.

CHAPTER 7

BRIEFING TO THE DCSPER

The Family Support Briefing, pages 118-138, was presented to LTG Carney, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Department of the Army, on 3 April 1992 by the wives involved in this Family Support documentation project. The briefing categorizes Family Support related problems into eight groups: Dependency, Ignorance, Demands, Resources, Consistency, Rear Detachment, Regulations, and Expectations.

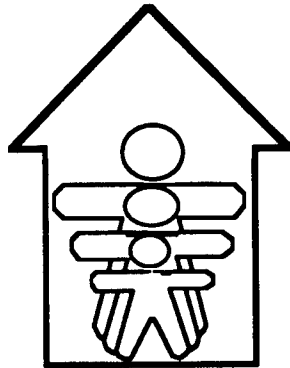
Recommended changes/improvements to the Army's Family Support Program are concentrated into five principal sections: the Commander, Family Support Liaison/Rear Detachment, Family Support Coordinator/Family Assistance Center, Family Support Group, and Soldiers and Families.

Recommendations presented to LTG Carney were outlined under these seven headings (see pages 134-136): Family Maintenance, Family Support Liaison/Rear Detachment, Family Support Coordinator/Family Assistance Center, Official Status, Clear Regulations, Command Responsibility, and The Facelift.

The briefing references a letter sent to Mr. Bob Ray, Army Community and Family Support Center, summarizing recommended changes following a review of Draft DA Pam 608-47. The letter also transmitted a document expanding on recommended changes concerning six issues: Family Support Group Definitions and Participants, Commanders' Responsibilities, Military Family Support Group Liaison, Newsletters, Liability, and Fund Raising.

Family Support Briefing

WHO CARES?



DCSPER – 3 April 1992

Introduction

GOOD AFTERNOON GENERAL CARNEY, GENERAL JONES...

We would like to begin our time with you by presenting you with a "Who Cares?" button. We adopted this logo at the beginning of our project. At first glance, this question may appear to express frustration and cynicism; feelings many an Army family member has had.

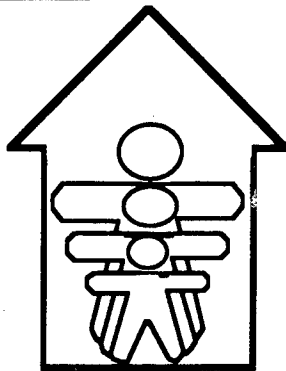
Yet, it is also a valid question: Who really does care? Those of us who are here today, represent a larger number of spouses at the Army War College who have all personally answered this question..."I Do!". We know you do too. We thank you for this opportunity to share what we have learned and experienced with you.

Last year the Commandant of the Army War College, requested that money be set aside for a study project on Family Support to be accomplished during this academic year. It was felt that the recent Family Support experiences of this group of spouses needed to be captured. The call for volunteers went out soon after we arrived at the War College and many responded, eager to share their experiences and to hear of others'.

As you can imagine, we have come to Carlisle from all over the world, with a wide variety of experience in volunteerism on behalf of military families. At this time each of our group present today, will introduce herself and tell you where her most recent or most pertinent experience with Family Support was.

Family Support Briefing

WHO CARES?



DCSPER – 3 April 1992

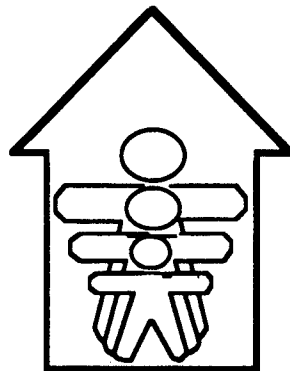
Introduction

In January, we held a comprehensive three day conference. The majority of the participants had been Family Support Group leaders during Desert Shield/Storm and Just Cause...when support systems were severely tested. A copy of the conference agenda is included in your briefing packet. The conference accomplished several goals: attendees learned a great deal about recent Family Support developments and issues from those who are directly working those issues.

Valuable information was gained about each participant's experiences through small group discussions and written surveys. Additionally, each one gained a better appreciation of the diversity of our experiences and the challenges we all faced. Additional information has since been collected from other spouses at the War College and from interviews with single commanders. The conference resulted in three distinct projects.

1. A document compiling our comments and revisions of the Draft Pam 608-47. This was sent to Mr. Bob Ray last month.
2. A publication documenting the unique Family Support experiences of each one who submitted a completed survey and of each commander interviewed. We expect to have this project completed later in April. We're excited about this project as we hope it will be a valuable and colorful contribution to our Army's history.
3. This briefing .

WHO CARES?



DCSPER – 3 April 1992

Introduction

Although there are many heartwarming success stories in Family Support Groups...our combined experience has exposed some common problems which we will now address, along with our recommendations.

It is our hope that as we bring our pieces of the puzzle you are presently working on; a clearer picture will be seen...resulting in wise, strategic planning for Family Support in the future.

Problems



- ⇒ **Dependency** ⇒ **Consistency**
- ⇒ **Ignorance** ⇒ **Rear Detachment**
- ⇒ **Demands** ⇒ **Regulations**
- ⇒ **Resources** ⇒ **Expectations**

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Problems

⇒ ***Dependency***

1. Some family members were overly dependent on FSGs and the Army.
2. They expected FSGs to solve their problems, deal with creditors, etc.
3. They were not prepared for the issues that arose during deployment.
4. Their personal affairs were not in order.

Problems



- ⇒ **Dependency** ⇒ **Consistency**
- ⇒ **Ignorance** ⇒ **Rear Detachment**
- ⇒ **Demands** ⇒ **Regulations**
- ⇒ **Resources** ⇒ **Expectations**

DCSPER – 3 April 1992

Problems

⇒ ***Ignorance***

- 1. Some family members did not understand the military system.**
- 2. They were uninformed about working within system.**
- 3. They were taxing Family Support Group for things that should have been routine, i.e. ID Cards, making medical appointments, etc.**
- 4. They didn't understand Family Support structure or how it worked.**
- 5. Many felt that they could call on the Battalion Commander's wife 24 hours a day for routine help.**
- 6. They felt it was her job to take care of them.**

Problems



- ⇒ **Dependency** ⇒ **Consistency**
- ⇒ **Ignorance** ⇒ **Rear Detachment**
- ⇒ **Demands** ⇒ **Regulations**
- ⇒ **Resources** ⇒ **Expectations**

DCSPER – 3 April 1992

Problems

⇒ ***Demands***

- 1. There were too many demands on an ill-prepared system.**
- 2. The entire Family Support System was overtaxed in some locations.**
- 3. In many cases, there was no precedent for such a major deployment and Family Support was not in place.**

Problems



- ⇒ **Dependency** ⇒ **Consistency**
- ⇒ **Ignorance** ⇒ **Rear Detachment**
- ⇒ **Demands** ⇒ **Regulations**
- ⇒ **Resources** ⇒ **Expectations**

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Problems

⇒ **Resources**

1. Information on Family Support and interpretation of what was authorized varied greatly from installation to installation.
2. Many reported problems getting newsletters printed or mailed, problems with reimbursement for Family Support Group expenses such as long distance phone calls to Family Support Group members out of the immediate area.
3. Frequently unit resources were not made available to Family Support Groups i.e. copy machines, telephones, rosters, unit funds.

Problems



- ⇒ **Dependency** ⇒ **Consistency**
- ⇒ **Ignorance** ⇒ **Rear Detachment**
- ⇒ **Demands** ⇒ **Regulations**
- ⇒ **Resources** ⇒ **Expectations**

DCSPER – 3 April 1992

Problems

⇒ **Consistency**

1. We all had different information and guidance about what was available and what was legal according to regulations.
2. There were inconsistencies concerning resources available to Family Support Groups.
3. There were enormous discrepancies from post to post about what Family Support Groups were allowed to do, what funds were at hand and how they could raise money.
4. We learned that training, videos and other materials were available to some Family Support Groups while others had no idea they existed.
5. After comparing notes at our conference, many were amazed that we were all in the same Army.

Problems



- ⇒ **Dependency** ⇒ **Consistency**
- ⇒ **Ignorance** ⇒ **Rear Detachment**
- ⇒ **Demands** ⇒ **Regulations**
- ⇒ **Resources** ⇒ **Expectations**

DCSPER – 3 April 1992

Problems

⇒ ***Rear Detachment***

1. When there was no Rear Detachment or the Rear Detachment was poorly staffed, the problems for Family Support increased drastically.
2. Some Rear Detachments were so deficient that Family Support Groups had to take care of the Rear Detachment!

⇒ ***Regulations***

1. Family Support Group volunteers experienced great difficulty locating and interpreting regulations, PAMs, and Army policy.
2. Things that could be done at Post A were an absolute no-no at Post B.
3. Differences in interpretation became a major obstacle to the success of Family Support Groups.
4. Here were people eager to volunteer their time, but often their hands were tied by unclear Army policy.



Problems

- ⇒ **Dependency** ⇒ **Consistency**
- ⇒ **Ignorance** ⇒ **Rear Detachment**
- ⇒ **Demands** ⇒ **Regulations**
- ⇒ **Resources** ⇒ **Expectations**

DCSPER – 3 April 1992

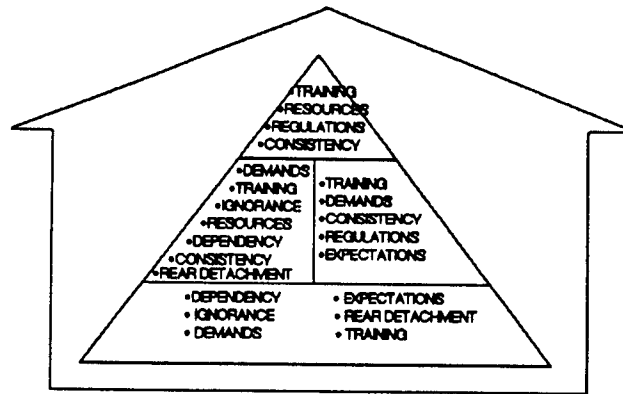
Problems

⇒ ***Expectations***

1. Although we feel a great sense of pride about what many spouses accomplished, we must report that:
2. Many spouses felt that they had been performing the job of the Commander or of the Rear Detachment.
3. Many spouses felt untrained and ill-equipped to fill the void that occurred with deployment.
4. Many spouses feared that they could not have continued if the war had lasted much longer—they were overwhelmed.
5. Many spouses said that they suffered from burnout that seemed to be the result of unrealistic expectations to be all things to all people—some felt “Used and Abused”.

Family Support Briefing

"Who Cares?"...A Model



DCSPER – 3 April 1992

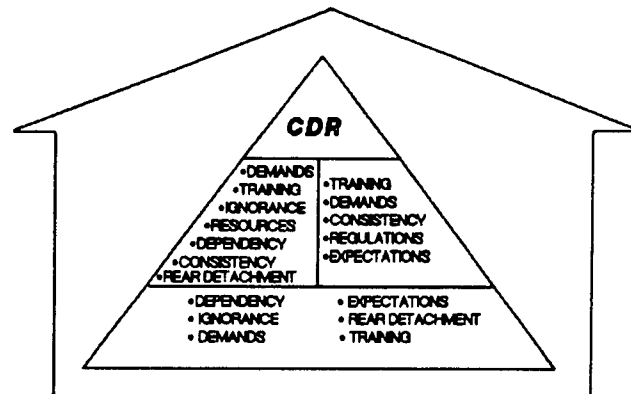
"Who Cares?"...A Model

⇒ *The Model*

1. After these problems were identified at the conference, we realized that the problems were systemic.
2. The problems were not only with Family Support Groups.
3. It became clear that the old system was outdated and needed streamlining for tomorrow's Army.
4. The problems mentioned overlap and do not exist in isolation.
5. As we looked at different options for Family Support, i.e. Ombudsman, British, we began to identify certain problems that were related and then to formulate a Family Support structure that could best address these problems.
6. Our vision of how Family Support should look began to take shape.
7. Now we'd like to share with you, "Who Cares?"...A Model.

Family Support Briefing

"Who Cares?"...A Model



DCSPER – 3 April 1992

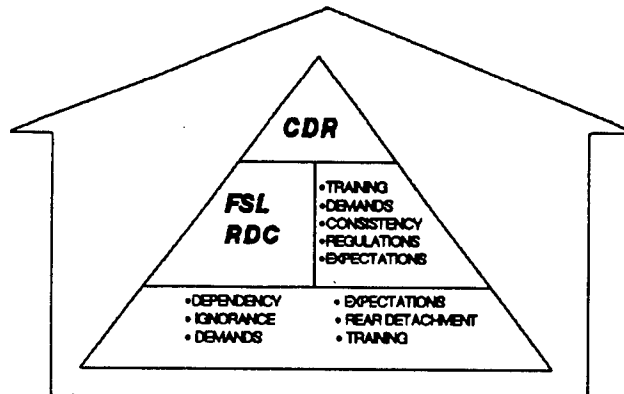
"Who Cares?"...A Model

⇒ The Commander

- 1. Commander is responsible and accountable for family programs within the unit.**
- 2. The Commander should provide unqualified support for all Family Support programs to his soldiers and their families.**
- 3. Training should be provided Commanders on implementation of Family Support Groups to include structuring options, activities, and support requirements of Family Support Groups.**
- 4. Training, i.e. P.C.C., should focus on the commander's role in Family Support, to neutralize the stereotypical view that only the commander's spouse can lead the Family Support Group.**

Family Support Briefing

“Who Cares?”...A Model



DCSPER – 3 April 1992

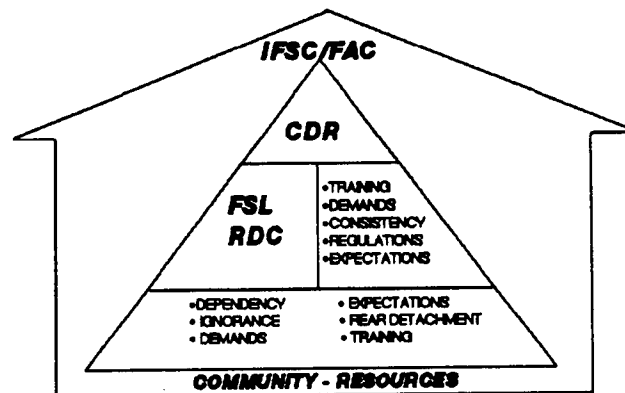
“Who Cares?”...A Model

⇒ Family Support Liaison/ Rear Detachment Commander

1. This dual-hatted individual ensures access to office space, equipment, and other resources to enable the unit Family Support Group volunteers to function.
2. Coordinates training programs for Family Support Group volunteers.
3. Is responsible for production of the newsletter, updated rosters, and referral of family members to resource agencies.
4. The Family Support Liaison is a critical link between the Family Support Group and the Commander.
5. The Family Support Liaison and Rear Detachment Commander will also represent the Commander, as required, during Commander's absences.
6. Continuity is assured during times of sustainment and deployment with the positions of Family Support Liaison and Rear Detachment Commander being held by the same individual.

Family Support Briefing

"Who Cares?"...A Model



DCSPER - 3 April 1992

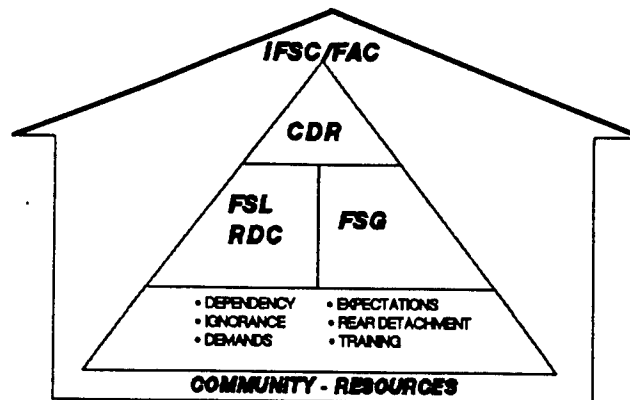
"Who Cares?"...A Model

⇒ ***Installation Family Support Coordinator /Family Assistance Center***

1. Is the resource bank for information, guidance, and training for Family Support Groups throughout the installation.
2. This is where volunteers go to get program ideas and help on cutting through red tape.
3. It is also an important resource for Unit Family Support Liaison and Rear Detachment Commander.
4. The Installation Family Support Coordinator transitions to the Family Assistance Center as needed for emergency deployments and mobilizations. Continuity is assured.
5. The Installation Family Support Coordinator already exists at some installations and is working well.

Family Support Briefing

"Who Cares?"...A Model



DCSPER - 3 April 1992

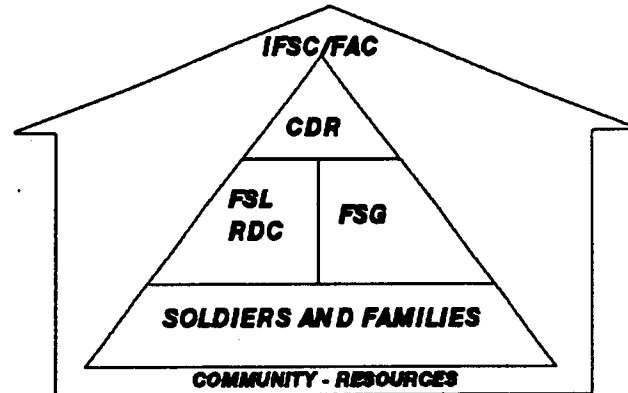
"Who Cares?"...A Model

⇒ Family Support Group

1. The Family Support Group contributes significantly to overall unit effectiveness, while playing an important role in the morale of soldiers, their families and the social life of the unit.
2. In addition to social activities, the Family Support Group provides direct face to face caring and comfort not available elsewhere.
3. It is comprised of willing genuine volunteers not draftees, who are motivated by concern and care.
4. The Family Support Group should not be expected do the Army's job but to work in conjunction with the Installation Family Support Coordinator, Family Support Liaison and the Commander.
5. For example, the Family Support Group would supply articles for publication in the unit newsletter.
6. Family Support Group priorities and activities are subject to the approval of the Commander.
7. The structure of the Family Support Group can take various forms, i.e., elected officers or an appointed council.

Family Support Briefing

“Who Cares?”...A Model



DCSPER – 3 April 1992

“Who Cares?”...A Model

⇒ *The Soldiers and Families*

- 1. Are educated about what Family Support is and what it is not.**
- 2. As informed participants they take responsibility for themselves and are prepared for deployment.**
- 3. If the family is not ready for deployment the soldier may not give 100 percent to his job.**
- 4. The greater the amount of responsibility accepted by the soldier and his family, the fewer the number of unreasonable demands that will be made on Family Support and tomorrow's Army.**

Family Support Briefing

"Who Cares?"...A Model



- ✓ **The Commander**
- ✓ **Family Support Liaison/Rear Detachment**
- ✓ **Family Support Coordinator/Family Assistance Center**
- ✓ **Family Support Group**
- ✓ **Soldiers and Families**

DCSPER – 3 April 1992

"Who Cares?"...A Model

- 1. "Who Cares?".... Our model may not sound like anything new or innovative. Some parts of it exist already in many different places. But if you adopt this model as the Army's standard and make it happen, Family Support would have the quality and consistency that it now lacks.**
- 2. To provide quality Family Support for tomorrow's army, it is essential to integrate the efforts of the components of the model during sustainment. This means a greater chance for family support success during deployment.**
- 3. We want to leave you with a clear idea of our recommendations:**

Family Support Briefing

Recommendations



- **Family Maintenance**
- **Family Support Liaison/Rear Detachment**
- **Family Support Coordinator and Family Assistance Center**
- **Official Status**
- **Clear Regulations**
- **Command Responsibility**
- **The Facelift**

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⇒ ***Family Maintenance***

1. Develop a program of Preventative Maintenance that starts as soon as a soldier enters the Army.
2. Train the soldier about everyone's role in Family Support, especially his own.

⇒ ***Family Support Liaison/Rear Detachment***

1. Establish in every unit. Make certain it's there during sustainment.
2. Should be branch related, career enhancing-not a weak link.

⇒ ***Installation FS Coord/Family Asst Center***

1. Establish at every installation, make sure that it's in place during sustainment.
2. This could mean simply changing the title of someone who is already in place, i.e. ACS.



- **Family Maintenance**
- **Family Support Liaison/Rear Detachment**
- **Family Support Coordinator and Family Assistance Center**
- **Official Status**
- **Clear Regulations**
- **Command Responsibility**
- **The Facelift**

DCSPER – 3 April 1992

Recommendations

⇒ ***Official Status***

1. Give official status to Family Support Groups.
2. Earmark funds specifically for Family Support Groups use.

⇒ ***Clear Regulations***

1. Do everything possible to make it possible for Family Support Groups to operate.
2. Provide volunteers the clear guidelines they deserve.

⇒ ***Command Responsibility***

1. Make the Commander responsible and accountable for Family Support.
2. Make Family Support a high priority.
3. Train every Commander about Family Support as if the Commander was single.

Recommendations



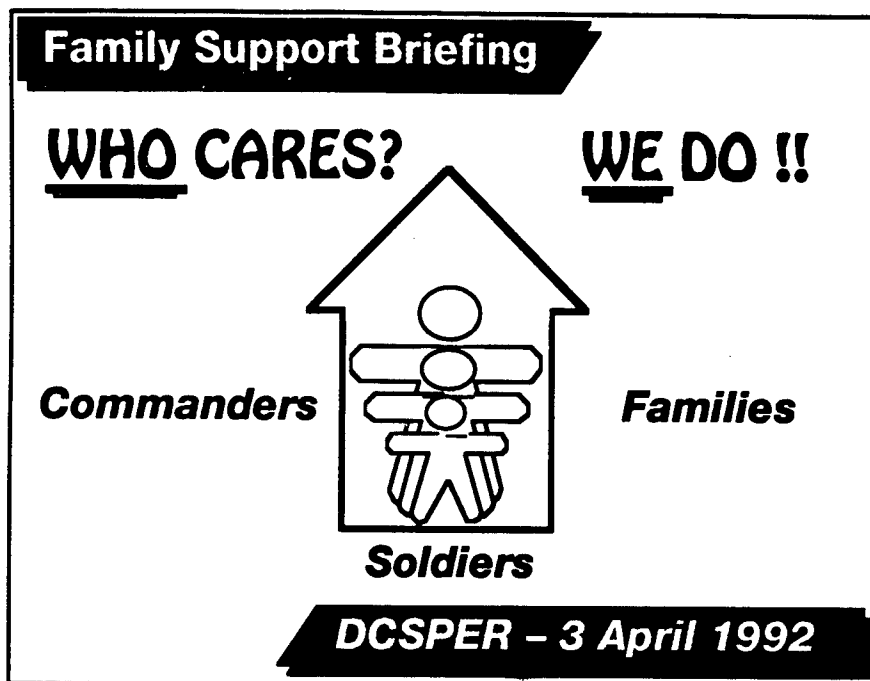
- ➔ **Family Maintenance**
- ➔ **Family Support Liaison/Rear Detachment**
- ➔ **Family Support Coordinator and Family Assistance Center**
- ➔ **Official Status**
- ➔ **Clear Regulations**
- ➔ **Command Responsibility**
- ➔ **The Facelift**

DCSPER – 3 April 1992

Recommendations

⇒ *The Facelift*

- 1. Develop videos to market and explain Family Support.**
- 2. Army wide distribution of a video that explains who does what in family support.**
- 3. Army wide distribution of training videos for Family Support Groups volunteers.**
- 4. Solicit feedback from experienced Family Support volunteers to develop these videos, i.e. USAWC wives and NCO Academy Wives.**



“Who Cares?”

🍏 *Commanders Care*

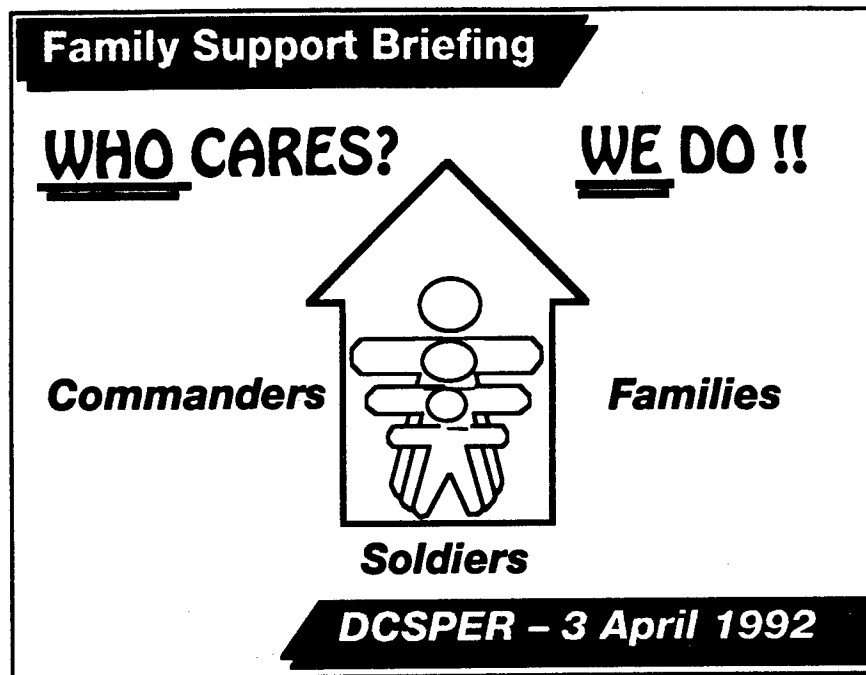
1. Commanders care about their soldiers, about them being the 'best' that they can be.
2. Commanders know that soldiers don't give 100% unless their families are OK.

🍏 *Soldiers care*

1. Soldiers care about an Army they can be proud of, an “Army Family” that their family can be a part of.
2. Soldiers care about their families.

🍏 *Families care*

Spouses and Families care about their soldier and the Army that he serves and loves.



“Who Cares?”

🍏 We Care

1. This hands-on family support experience is behind us now, our husbands soon go on to strategic level positions, but we still care.
2. We cared enough to commit ourselves to this project four months ago. We cared before ODS and Just Cause, during ODS and Just Cause and we haven't stopped. We care about Tomorrow's Army Families. We want the best for them.
3. Gen. Carney, we'd like to present you with a briefing book, containing information that we've shared with you today.
4. We feel this contains the keys to quality Family Support for tomorrow's Army.

APPENDIX A

ACRONYMS

ACS: Army Community Service

AD: Armored Division
Active Duty

AER: Army Emergency Relief

ARCOM: Army Reserve COMmand

BDE/Bde: Brigade

BN/Bn: Battalion

CAS³: Combined Arms and Services Staff School

CDR/Cdr: Commander

CHAMPUS: Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed
Services

CO: Commanding Officer

CONUS: CONTinental United States

COSCOM: Corps Support COMmand

CPO: Consolidated/Civilian Personnel Office(r)

CPR: Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

CS: Combat Support

CSS: Combat Service Support

CTS: Command Team Seminar

DA: Department of the Army

DEERS: Dependent Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System

DEH: Director of Engineering and Housing

DPCA: Director of Personnel and Community Activities

EFMP: Exceptional Family Member Program

EM's: Enlisted Service Members

FAC: Family Assistance Center

FACT: Family Assistance Care Team
 FBC: Former Battalion Commander
 FRO: Family Readiness Officer
 FS: Family Support
 FSG: Family Support Group
 FTX: Field Training Exercise
 HHC: Headquarters and Headquarters Company
 HQ: Headquarters
 ID Card: Identification Card
 JAG: Judge Advocate General
 JRTC: Joint Readiness Training Center
 LES: Leave and Earnings Statement
 MAC: Military Airlift Command
 MAW: Marine Aircraft Wing
 Military Airlift Wing
 METL: Mission Essential Task List
 MFO: Multinational Force Observer
 MILCOM: Military Community
 Military Ranks, Army:
 LTC--Lieutenant Colonel
 MAJ--Major
 CPT--Captain
 LT--Lieutenant
 CSM--Command Sergeant Major
 1SG--First Sergeant
 MSG--Master Sergeant
 SFC--Sergeant First Class
 SSG--Staff Sergeant
 SGT/E-5--Sergeant
 CPL/E-4--Corporal
 PFC/E-3--Private First Class
 PVT/E-2/E-1--Private
 MWR: Morale, Welfare, and Recreation
 NCO: Noncommissioned Officer
 NCOIC: Noncommissioned Officer in Charge

NEO: Noncombatant Evacuation Operation/Order
NTC: National Training Center
OCONUS: Outside CONTinental United States
ODS: Operation Desert Storm
OJT: On-the-Job Training
OWC: Officers' Wives Club
PAC: Personnel Administration Center
PCC: Pre-Command Course
POC: Point of Contact
RD: Rear Detachment
RDC: Rear Detachment Commander
RDO: Rear Detachment Officer
SATCOM: Satellite Communications
S-1: Adjutant/ Personnel Staff Officer
S-2: Intelligence Staff Officer
S-3: Operations Staff Officer
S-4: Logistics Staff Officer
SITREP: SITuation REPort
SLC BN: Slice BN; supporting battalion in Bde Task Force
TDA: Table of Distribution and Allowances
TOE: Table of Organization and Equipment
VFW: Veterans of Foreign Wars
XO: Executive Officer

APPENDIX B

FAMILY ASSISTANCE AGENCIES

This appendix presents an example of a CONUS listing of problematic situations, which agencies to call for assistance, and the appropriate phone number. This was handy as a quick reference. Also included from that same post is a listing of agencies and a brief description of their capabilities. Others may find this helpful as a starting point for organizing information for their Family Support Groups.

PROBLEM INDEX

WHICH AGENCY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HANDLING WHAT PROBLEM?

Adoptions	Social Work Services (BACH)	798-8801
Bad Checks	Check Control Officer	798-7536
CHAMPUS	CHAMPUS Advisor (BACH)	798-8280
Child Abuse	Social Work Services	798-8601
Child Problems	Social Work Services	798-8801
Citizenship	ACS	798-3658
	Legal Assistance Office	798-4927
Claims	Claims Office	798-6428 or 5011
Consumer Affairs	ACS	798-5518
Divorce	Legal Assistance Office	798-4927
Drug and Alcohol	Drug Control Div. (DPCA)	798-4411
Emergency Leave	AER	798-6954
	American Red Cross	798-2171
Employment	ACS	798-3032
Financial Assistance	ACS Financial Services	798-4011
Food Locker	Staff Chaplain	798-6123
Food Stamps (TN)	Dept of Human Services	648-5500
(KY)	Cabinet for Human Resrces	887-2512
Foster Homes (TN)	Dept of Human Services	648-5500
(KY)	Dept of Human Resources	887-2503
Handicapped	ACS (EFMP)	798-2727
ID Card (DEERS)	IOP	798-4838
Immunizations	BACH	798-8881
Landlord/Tenant	Legal Assistance Office	798-4927
Lawyer Referral	Legal Assistance Office	798-4927
Locked Out of Qrtrs.	Housing (during duty hrs)	798-6154 or 6155 or 6156
	Guest House (after duty)	798-2531
Name Changes	Legal Assistance Office	798-4927
Notary Public	Legal Assistance Office	798-4927
Nutrition	Diet Therapy (BACH)	798-8600
Passports		798-4965
Visa/Naturalization	ACS	798-3658
Paternity	Legal Assistance Office	798-4927
Power of Attorney	Legal Assistance Office	798-4927
Schools	Administration	439-3790
	Information	439-1927
Separations	Legal Assistance Office	798-4927
Sexual Harassment	EEO	798-2928
Shipment of Goods	Transportation	798-7151
Social Work Services	BACH	798-8800
Spouse Abuse	Spouse Abuse Hotline	798-5875
Stray Animals	Animal Shelter	798-5519
Survivor Benefits	Legal Assistance Office	798-4927
Taxes	Legal Assistance Office	798-4927
Vehicle Registration	IOP	798-3091
Well Baby/Pediatrics	BACH	798-8188
WIC	ACS	798-4496
Wills	Legal Assistance Office	798-4927

AMERICAN RED CROSS

The American Red Cross will obtain verification of a family emergency and relay the information to your sponsor and the military command when emergency leave may be necessary. Emergency communications are given priority handling. The messages may involve notice of birth, serious illness, death in the family, critical family problems or similar urgent situations.

Financial assistance for emergency travel related to a death or critical illness of an immediate family member may be arranged. If the American Red Cross cannot provide financial assistance, a referral to Army Emergency Relief (AER) may be given.

If you need assistance from the American Red Cross, you are urged to contact the local chapter in your community. If your sponsor is assigned to Fort Campbell, the Station Manager of the American Red Cross can be contacted by calling 798-2171. After duty hours, the emergency worker can be reached by calling 798-2151.

Numerous volunteer opportunities are also available at the American Red Cross. Red Cross volunteers are involved in Disaster Services, Blood Services, Health & Safety Services, Military/Social Services, International Services, and Youth Services. Our Health & Safety courses are taught year-round. For more information on our volunteer opportunities and courses, call 798-2171.

ARMY COMMUNITY SERVICE (ACS)

ACS is an organization designed to assist commanders in supporting soldiers and their families by identifying individual and community needs and issues and coordinating resources to meet those needs and issues. They're staffed by highly-trained, human service professionals and volunteers who provide information and assistance to the Army family. The main office is located in Bldg T-74 on Texas Ave.; ACS Consumer Affairs/Financial Planning and Army Emergency Relief (AER) are located in Bldg T-23 on Ohio Ave.; ACS Lending Closet is located in Bldg # 2326, 17th and Kentucky Avenues; and the Outreach Program is located in Bldg # 4859/4860, Morgan Rd. The following current programs are available:

Army Emergency Relief (AER): AER is a private, non-profit organization established to assist soldiers, retirees, and their family members in emergency financial situations, due to no fault of their own. Financial assistance is given in the form of a loan, grant, or a combination of the two. Loans are repaid by Class E allotments. To apply for AER assistance, soldiers need to contact their unit commander. AER is not authorized to assist in divorces, marriage, ordinary leave or vacations, liquidations or consolidation of outstanding debts, civilian court fees, fines, bail, legal fees, or income taxes, continuing assistance, bad check redemption, maintenance of standard of living and items for comfort or convenience. Your annual contribution to the AER Campaign supports this service to the military. Point of Contact is the Emergency Relief Coordinator, tel. 798-4258.

Army Family Advocacy Program (AFAP): This is a specialized program to provide education, prevention, and treatment services in cases of child or spouse abuse and its related problems. As part of the program, a Spouse Abuse Shelter provides temporary refuge to female spouses and their well children experiencing violence in the home, and is operated 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Admittance to the shelter is gained through the Blanchfield Army Community Hospital (BACH) Emergency Room. Professional counseling is provided for the spouse and the abuser. Point of Contact is the Family Advocacy Program Manager (FAPM), tel. 798-4191. A Spouse Abuse Support Group is offered to any military wife who is physically or mentally abused or under the threat of physical abuse by her spouse. The group meets every Tuesday at 1800. For more information, call 798-5875.

Consumer Affairs/Financial Assistance Planning (CAFAP): Consumer Affairs provides information and assistance to soldiers and their families about consumerism. Educational classes or briefings are available to any interested unit or organization, as is assistance in resolving consumer complaints through discussion and mediation with the parties involved. Also included are educational seminars, blue book car prices, insurance company ratings and credit procedures. Point of Contact is the CAFAP Coordinator, tel. 798-5518. Financial planning has three main functions: preparation and evaluation of budgets; management of checking accounts; and the Debt Liquidation Program (DLP). Under the DLP, a budget is prepared for living expenses and a reduced payment plan is arranged with creditors. Classes concerning budget planning and checkbook management are given, upon request, to any interested unit or organization. Point of Contact is the CAFAP Coordinator, tel. 798-4011.

Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP): This program maintains a resource file of military and civilian special education and health-related services. Families with exceptional members are provided information about community services available to meet their needs as well as information about their rights and responsibilities under local and federal laws. A two-week summer day camp for exceptional children is held each year, and a support group for parents is conducted monthly. Point of Contact is the EFMP Coordinator, tel. 798-6410.

Family Member Employment Assistance Program (FMEAP): The primary function of the FMEAP is to maintain, in a single location, information pertaining to public and private sector employment, career-enhancing educational offerings, and volunteer opportunities. While the program's main emphasis is focused on serving family members, job information and counseling is also provided to active duty military and retirees on a space-available basis. At least three workshops are held monthly in reference to employment-related topics. Point of Contact is the FMEAP Coordinator, tel. 798-6410.

Information, Referral (I&R) and Follow-Up: I&R maintains a comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date resource file on services available at Fort Campbell and in the local communities. These files contain detailed information about agencies and organizations and the services they provide. For information, call 798-5080.

Outreach Program: This program links military and civilian support services with first-term enlisted soldiers and their families living off-post. During the spring and summer, the Outreach Program Committee conducts a visitation program for trailer parks and apartment complexes, with the participation of various civilian and military agencies. Home visits to newcomers are conducted to provide information about community services. The Mayoral Program improves the quality of life for military families by giving residents a voice in decision-making regarding community policies, facilities and services. It establishes a system of community (non-military) mayors who are able to create an atmosphere mutual concern among Army family members and the command group at Fort Campbell, in order to make optimal use of available resources. Point of Contact is the Outreach Program Coordinator, tel. 798-3849/4748.

Relocation Program: This program provides welcome and deployment briefings upon request; is responsible for the Fort Campbell Welcome Packet; and maintains a resource library containing welcome packets of all military installations, world-wide, regardless of service branch. English as a Second Language (ESL) and citizenship classes are offered in the evenings for foreign-born spouses and soldiers. Information services are offered at In/Out Processing, Bldg # 2603, daily. A "Moving to Germany" workshop is held the second Wednesday of every month at ACS (conference room), from 0900-1300. Welcome committees visit the two post guest houses providing new families with information on community activities and resources. ACS Relocation sponsors a Waiting Families Support Group for families whose sponsor is on an unaccompanied tour or TDY. Point of Contact is the Relocation Coordinator, tel. 798-2727. Relocation also operates the ACS Lending Closet, Bldg #2326, tel 798-4353, which provides arriving and departing military families with basic household items for a 30-day period.